

**PROOFS**  
of the  
**LIFE**  
and  
**DEATH**  
of  
**JESUS**

**HUBERT LUNS**

# **PART I**

**pages 08-228**

**THE ARCHKOVOLUME  
ITS APPRAISALS**

**FOLLOWED BY  
THE ARCHKOVOLUME ITSELF  
pages 85-228**

# **PART II**

**pages 229-293**

**WHEN WAS CHRIST BORN?  
&  
THE MESSIANIC EXPECTATION  
AS MOTIVATION  
FOR THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST**

# **PART III**

**pages 294-340**

**ARTICLES ON QUESTIONS OF  
CHRONOLOGY**

- **The Sun Miracle**
- **Sukkoth and the Equinox**
- **Chanukah, its origin and place**
- **The Panin Bible Statistics (PBS)**

# PRELIMINARY REMARKS

(Pertaining to the completely revised appraisal of the ArchkoVolume.)

## General Background

The editor of the ArchkoVolume, not author, is Reverend William Dennes Mahan, an American Cumberland Presbyterian minister in Boonville, Missouri. It was published in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is said to be a translation of Jewish, Roman, and other contemporary manuscripts about the life, trial and death of Jesus of Nazareth. If authentic, these are extremely important because next to the Bible there is really very little available in profane historical documents to substantiate the events surrounding the life and death of Jesus Christ, Son of Man. The book was initially received by some as true. But that was not appreciated. Not long after its initial publication a barrage of attacks started, seeking to discredit the publication based on a number of incongruities in the text and errors in translation and writing (there were no typewriters then), all of which will be addressed here. Since then, well educated men have treated the Archko Volume as one of the great frauds in the field of religion. In the leading theological circles of today's world the book is still seen as a forgery and a fraud.

Yet, in all the years since its introduction it has always attracted a sizable number of followers. At least six editions were published in the U.S. in the period from 2010 to 2020. Moreover, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million, and Walmart all sell new copies online. The book thrives because a number of readers are moved by the texts and wholeheartedly endorse them. Remarkable! Why? Would not it be because the texts speak for themselves? And that's the reason I set myself to the task. As far as I know, I am the first who ventured to appraise the ArchkoVolume on the basis of the presented texts. If they are authentic the internal consistency should be able to demonstrate that. A Herculean task in view of the many and diverse documents, but I made it! I also explain how a number of errors have crept in. Based on my findings the conclusion can be drawn, altogether justified, that Reverend Mahan came across these ancient manuscripts – he never claimed to have discovered them in the way discoveries are made! He got them on a silver platter. The enemies of Christ are many and they have infiltrated in high positions in all church denominations and the Roman Catholic Church is no exception to this. That explains a lot, but also here I will go deeper into it.

Reverend Mahan was born July 27, 1824 in Pittsylvania County, Virginia to William and Permelia Mahan. In 1837 his family moved to Missouri, and by 1845, he was living in Saline County, Missouri where he was serving as a Presbyterian minister. Mahan married Martha Johnston in 1850, and together they had two daughters. Mahan was living and preaching in the small town Boonville. He died on October 19, 1906 in good Boonville and is buried there in the Walnut Grove Cemetery, and his grave is still to be found.

The page long obituary in The Paducah Evening Sun ends with the telling comment: *"It is almost incredible that a country preacher, with no special pretensions to scholarship, as his obituary states, should have produced so plausible a forgery!"* I would not say 'almost incredible' but totally impossible for someone with such a modest education and intellectual capacity. Even a genius would not have been able to accomplish the feat. In final resort he has been falsely accused and deserves to be acquitted of all blame.

## Publication History

In 1879 Mahan published a pamphlet of thirty-three pages entitled "A Correct Transcript of Pilate's Court", subtitled "Acta Pilati", to be called only Acta Pilati in later editions. It purported to be the official report by Pontius Pilate about the trial and death of Jesus, addressed to the Roman Emperor Tiberius, of which there exist a number of different

stories of doubtful authenticity, like the “Anaphora Pilati” and the “Acts of Pilati”, contained in the so-called “Gospel of Nicodemus”. Mahan claimed he got the text in 1856 from a German scholar who called himself Henry C. Whydaman – a fake name, though Mahan wasn’t aware of it. Subsequently a so-called Father Peter Freelinhusen “*the chief guardian of the Vatican*”, supposedly sent the Latin text to Whydaman’s brother-in-law, C. C. Vantberger of New York (of course a fake name too), with the request to do a translation for Reverend Mahan. Not surprisingly, the names and the persons belonging to them, of Whydaman, Freelinhusen, and Vantberger, are otherwise unknown.

In 1941 Dr. Edgar Goodspeed said to have discovered an 1842 pamphlet (that strangely enough cannot be found), published in Boston that, so he said, closely resembles Pilate’s Court, and it referred to a Latin manuscript in Vienne. Per Beskow claimed in the 1980s that this Boston pamphlet had to be based on the French publication by Joseph Méry: “Ponce Pilate à Vienne”, a short story first published in “La Revue de Paris” in 1837<sup>1</sup>, republished by Méry in 1840 as part of his “Les Nuits de Londres” (The nights of London)<sup>2</sup> and again in 1860 as part of his “Contes et Nouvelles” (Stories and news)<sup>3</sup> – the last one appeared just in time to ‘prove’ that Mahan copied the story from there. Indeed it shows many similarities with Pilate’s Court. Méry states in the preamble that he had been inspired to write it by an old Latin manuscript from some castle in between Vienne and the Toll; but actually it’s a riddle that points at a Masonic plot (see note p. 161). Mahan has been accused by Beskow to have created correspondence to demonstrate that he was the discoverer of the manuscript (‘discovered’ by Méry), but this accusation is groundless, for if Mahan used an old Latin manuscript at the Vatican, then of course it’s not the same that ‘presumably’ Méry discovered in France. In ancient times the copying of important documents was painstakingly carried out, and so it is to be expected to find the same Acta Pilati at several locations. If Mahan had only published the Acta Pilati, then Goodspeed and Beskow might have a point, but ‘One swallow does not make a summer’.

In 1884 Reverend Mahan self-published the first version of his book, entitled “The archaeological writings of the Sanhedrim and Talmuds of the Jews, taken from the ancient parchments and scrolls at Constantinople [Istanbul] and the Vatican at Rome, being the record made by the enemies of Jesus of Nazareth in his day: the most interesting history ever read by man.” This included an expanded version of Pilate’s Court that saw the light in 1879, plus a series of other texts as indicated in the title. The Acta Pilati is some 1500 words longer than its predecessor. While Pilate’s Court in itself is more than satisfactory, Mahan claimed that seeing the original at the Vatican library allowed the expansion of what he’d published in 1879.

### Inconsistencies and accusations

Questions were raised how it was that in the 1884 edition large portions of “Eli and the Story of the Magi” were to be found word-for-word identical with the 1880 novel “Ben-Hur” by Lew Wallis that remained for fifty years the US all-time bestseller. Three years later Mahan published an edition of 248 pages, now called for the first time “The Archko Volume”. Since then all editions are identical to this one of 1887. No new material was added; it was a reproduction of the 1884 edition of 352 pages, but thoughtfully it omitted the story of the Magi that made up a quarter of the 1884 edition. It also gathered the various notes which Mahan had prefixed to each text so as to form a new introduction.

The discovered texts are otherwise unknown to scholarship, and the volume contains various inconsistencies and misspellings, for instance it quotes an unknown Greek philosopher, Meeleesen, which is probably Melissos, a Roman writer mentioned by Pliny the

<sup>1</sup> T14 (pp. 172-192) / downloadable at [books.google.co](https://books.google.co)

<sup>2</sup> T2 (pp. 170-227) / downloadable at Gallica BnF

<sup>3</sup> (pp. 175-204) / downloadable at Gallica BnF

Elder among those from whom he drew materials. Mahan's material includes references to Josephus, unknown today. It has unsubstantiated claims that Philo spoke often of Jesus, and there are inaccuracies like "*the scribes of those days were most all Rabbis*". There is an erroneous description of the making of papyrus, and a wrong chronology for both Philo and Tacitus, and the dates and authorship assigned to the different documents are inconsistent, which leads to confusion, but I have resolved that.

One of the book's ten documents, a letter from Emperor Constantine requesting fifty copies of the Bible, is authentic. Reverend Mahan claimed that he transcribed it from the first page of one of Constantine's Bible's in Constantinople. The identical letter, was known to have first appeared in a 4<sup>th</sup>-century biography of Constantine, which does not prove that Mahan knew about it, and most likely he did not.

Mahan denied all the charges against him and asserted the truthfulness of what he had written. He was summoned before church authorities in September 1885 on charges of falsehood and plagiarism. The New Lebanon Presbytery, to which he belonged, tried the case at length, and Lew Wallace, the author of Ben-Hur, at the occasion also gave testimony. Because Wallace had never been to the Holy Land (or Turkey) before the writing of his book, he began research to familiarize himself with the area's geography and its history at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. We are talking 1873. And with that material he wrote the novel "Ben-Hur: a Tale of the Christ", first published in 1880.

In view of the foregoing, the conclusion is inescapable that the testimony of Wallace concerning the authorship is trustworthy, and – accepting that also Mahan spoke the truth – Eli's Story must have been planted in the Hagia Sophia library, in the same way that Pilate's Court had been planted in Boston. This time, however, with the cooperation of Jewish scholars, who first had to translate the relevant chapter into Hebrew. They also put the story of the wise men (the Magi) in a different context than Ben-Hur's. Would the enemies of Christ, whether within the Jewish commonwealth or within the Roman Church, go that far to discredit the original documents? Let's see it this way: in matters of religion, it is very useful to understand the malignancy of those who want our downfall. This concerted effort to negate the historicity of the Biblical narrative agrees with their way of doing, comparable to what was done with the confessions of Diana Vaughan in a scheme that is commonly known as the Taxil Hoax. I can certify that everything she writes in "Mémoires de Diana Vaughan" (1895) that is 'verifiable' – and that's a lot – appears to be hundred percent true. Here too: look at the text instead of the frame.

During the trial they argued that Mahan had never been to Rome, but that he had spent the time he was absent from Boonville on a farm in Illinois. Additional arguments were put forward that Mahan had not traveled to Rome and they presented a letter from Father Ehrie, prefect of the Vatican Library, stating that Mahan was entirely unknown there and that no person connected with the library had ever seen or heard of the Acta Pilati or any such manuscript. During the trial Lew Wallace testified that he was told that no record of Mahan's visit to Turkey or to the library of the Hagia Sophia existed, and that the primary sources Mahan cited were unknown. The verdict of the presbytery was nearly unanimous. He was convicted and suspended from the ministry for one year. The suspension was followed by permanent dismissal. Mahan, now in his sixties, made no effort to return to the pastorate, living the remainder of his life at the home of his son-in-law, a hotelkeeper in Boonville. He declined to make any further comments regarding the part he had taken in the preparation of the book except to say when he was told that the literary community pronounced it a forgery: "*Well, I have been a much deceived and a much persecuted man.*"

...

# THE ARCHKOVOLUME AN APPRAISAL

By HUBERT LUNS

~~~~~

## INDEX

|              |                                                                       |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| § 01 – p. 08 | <i>A much deceived and persecuted man</i>                             |
| § 02 – p. 10 | <i>How these works of literature were found</i>                       |
| § 03 – p. 14 | <i>The verdict was quickly settled</i>                                |
| § 04 – p. 15 | <i>In a way not easy to imagine...</i>                                |
| § 05 – p. 17 | <i>Truth, given the appearance of falsity</i>                         |
| § 06 – p. 20 | <i>A discussion of Gamaliel's Interview<br/>(the Pseudo-Gamaliel)</i> |
| § 07 – p. 27 | <i>None or all</i>                                                    |
| § 08 – p. 27 | <i>A discussion of the Documents</i>                                  |
| § 09 – p. 39 | <i>The Talmuds</i>                                                    |
| § 10 – p. 43 | <i>The Book of Jasher, a case in point</i>                            |
| § 11 – p. 46 | <i>The Sayings of Jesus<br/>and not The Gospel of Thomas</i>          |
| pp. 49 - 56  | <i>Notes</i>                                                          |

*Written by Hubert Luns in the year of our Lord 2015, or 2008 AD,  
considering that our beloved Lord and Saviour was born in 8 BC.*

MAJOR REVISION August 2021

== no copyright, only attribution ==

## THREE APPRAISALS OF THE ARCHKO VOLUME

### I. A MARE'S NEST FROM MISSOURI (1900)

A discussion of The Archko Volume

p. 57

*by M. R. James*

§ 11 – Introduction

§ 12 – Discussion of the arguments put forward

§ 13 – Pièces justificatives

§ 14 – Provenance and descriptions of the documents

§ 15 – Other forgeries

**Appendix-1:** 'Real Face of Jesus' a Sham

p. 66

### II. PILATE'S COURT, AND THE ARCHKO-VOLUME (19300)

Taken from the book: Strange New Gospels, chapter V

p. 71

*by Edgar J. Goodspeed*

§ 16 – An overview

§ 17 – How the Report was obtained ...and further discoveries

§ 18 – An evaluation

§ 19 – The Ben-Hur controversy

§ 20 – Further developments and conclusion

### III. UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT AUTHENTICITY (ca 2005)

BibleProbe weighs in on the side of Reverend Mahan

p. 81

*by Steve Keohane*

§ 21 – The purported events

§ 22 – The main argument

§ 23 – Dr. Goodspeed might be wrong

§ 24 – In defence of Reverend Mahan

### IV. Followed by: THE ARCHKOVOLUME ITSELF

pp. 85-228

# ***‘The Archko Volume’***

## ***1 – A much deceived and persecuted man***

Reverend William Dennis Mahan said near the end of his life: *“Well, I have been a much deceived and a much persecuted man.”* As a matter of fact, he has been the victim of a concerted effort to discredit the historicity of the life and death of Jesus. And, as the story by Joseph Méry shows, the Freemasonic movement is implicated, and not surprisingly, as their mission is to curse the Name of our beloved Saviour.<sup>4</sup>

From the Book of Truth, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014:

«« My beloved Son, Jesus Christ, is adored, honoured and lavished with great love by the angels and saints in Heaven. On Earth there is very little respect shown to He who suffered a terrible death to salvage the human race from sin. How the heavens weep at this time in history, as every attempt to rid the Earth of every sign that represents my Son is being made everywhere. (...) Your beloved Mother, the Mother of Salvation. »»

Well, this was written in 2014, and although the 19<sup>th</sup> century was not as bad as at this time in history, the rottenness was already far advanced. The perpetrators of the crime did not mind that Reverend Mahan had much to suffer by their actions. The enemies of Christ have no decency, no inner culture and certainly no compassion for their fellow men.

The New Lebanon Presbytery, on September 29<sup>th</sup> 1885, initiated a case against Reverend Mahan on charges of falsehood and plagiarism. In a motion by all the committee members, they declared a suspension of his ministry. In presenting the verdict, they explained in slick language that it was *“more the results of sympathy for him and his family than a desire for rigid administration of the law, and that this sympathy being exercised under the hope that said W.D. Mahan would use all proper efforts to heal the wounds his course has inflicted, and, to cease from his publishing activities.”*

It should be noted that he was brought before the committee and condemned, not by his denomination but by local peers. That is a bias and that is why such a verdict would be unacceptable in a court of justice. They acted unjustly, part of their feelings being inspired by jealousy - as always. Mahan was a man of integrity, dedicated to God. The members of his congregation in Boonville respected him and continued to do so after the verdict, because they knew him well and loved him. They ‘knew’ that he was a man of integrity.

Truth always wins in the end. I feel proud to have been able to give sensible arguments in defence of what Reverence Mahan published and to have taken away some of the odium that klings to his name in the hope that in a time not too far away he will be exonerated and that finally he will get the appreciation he deserves. His life and work reminds me of the superb hymn of the Cluniac Breviary of 1686, written by Jean de Santeuil and called “Ex quo, salus mortalium”:

---

<sup>4</sup> See the note in the introduction of “A Correct Transcript of Pilate’s Court” (p. 161)



*For man the Savior shed  
 His all atoning blood,  
 And, oh, shall ransomed man refuse  
 To suffer for his God?  
 Ashamed who now can be  
 To own the Crucified?  
 Nay, rather be our glory this,  
 To die for Him who died?*

*So felt Thy martyr, Lord;  
 By Thy right hand sustained,  
 He waged for Thee the battle's strife,  
 And threatened death disdained.*

*Upon the golden crown  
 Gazing with eager breath,  
 He fought as one who fain would die,  
 And, dying, conquer death.*

*Alone he stood unmoved  
 Amid his cruel foes;  
 Oh, wondrous was the might that then  
 Above his torturers rose!*

*Lord, give us grace to bear  
 Like him our cross of shame,  
 To do and suffer what Thou wilt,  
 For love of Thy dear name.*

*Jesu, the king of saints,  
 We praise Thee and adore,  
 Who art, with God the Father One  
 And Spirit evermore.*

-----

*Translated from Latin by  
 Isaac Williams (1802–1865).*

-----

## Table of contents of the ArchkoVolume

- Chapter 01:** Comments by Mahan: How these records were discovered (p. 86).
- Chapter 02:** Comments by Mahan: A short sketch of the Talmuds (p. 108).
- Chapter 03:** Constantine's letter in regard to having fifty copies of the Scriptures written and bound (p. 112).
- Chapter 04:** Jonathan's interview with the Bethlehem shepherds, the Report by Melker, Priest of the Synagogue at Bethlehem (p. 113).
- Chapter 05:** The Pseudo-Gamaliel: Gamaliel's interview with Joseph and Mary and others concerning Jesus (p. 122).
- Chapter 06:** The Apology of Caiaphas, originally called: The Report of Caiaphas sent to the Sanhedrin concerning the 'Execution' of Jesus (p. 131).
- Chapter 07:** The Confession of Caiaphas, originally called: The Report of Caiaphas sent to the Sanhedrin concerning the 'Resurrection' of Jesus (p. 142).
- Chapter 08:** The Acta Pilati or Pilate's Report to Cæsar on the arrest, trial, and Crucifixion of Jesus (p. 148); preceded by Paterculus' notes (p. 148) – a short mention, which underscores the Acta Pilati.  
Followed by A Correct Transcript of Pilate's Court (p. 160) with an Introduction that explains how it all started. Pilate's Court visualises the similarities and discrepancies with Pontius Pilate in Vienne that had been written previously by Joseph Méry.
- Chapter 09:** Herod Antipater's defence before the Roman Senate in regard to his conduct at Bethlehem (p. 172).
- Chapter 10:** Herod Antipater's defence before the Roman Senate in regard to the execution of John the Baptist (p. 176).
- Chapter 11:** The School of Hillel letters regarding God's providence to the Jews, which is almost half of the total volume of documents (pp. 179-228).

### 2 – How these works of literature were found

In the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Reverend Mahan was doing work on the discovery of very ancient documents, some of which, he was told, were held at the Senatorial Docket in the Vatican libraries and others at the Hagia Sophia library in Istanbul (Constantinople). (1) Claimed to be documents from the days of Christ, they relate to the circumstances of his life and death. They were gathered in the ArchkoVolume, first published in 1887. 'Archko' is derived from Archive-Konstantinople. They offer a riveting look at the people and events surrounding Jesus' life. Included are amongst others The Acta Pilata, which is Pilate's report to Cæsar, detailing the apprehension, trial and Crucifixion of Jesus. There is also a fake interview with the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, produced shortly after Jesus was crucified, but in view of its anciennity of great value. And there is a report concerning the Resurrection. For more than 135 years these 'finds' were considered a fraud. (2) After having looked carefully at the evidence, I cannot but disagree. I have set myself to the task of convincing the reader that they are genuine.

The American clergyman William Dennes Mahan (1824-1906) edited the ArchoVolume and appraised the manuscripts contained therein. He also wrote “Cæsar’s Court” and “Hebrew History of Baptism”, which are now difficult to obtain. It would be of interest to compare their style of writing with the documents of the ArchkoVolume as further evidence that Rev. Mahan could not have written them. While these books are difficult to obtain, the ArchkoVolume has never remained out of print for long. Reputed scholar M.R. James called it “*a ridiculous and disgusting American book*”. (3) Dr. Goodspeed asserted that Mahan’s “*unrefined fancy sometimes descends to the vulgar and the indecent*”. He reiterated that indeed it is a “*ridiculous and disgusting volume*”. The general public evidently does not agree. Otherwise they would not have continued to read it.

Although the views expressed by James and Goodspeed give rise to doubts, I have to admit that certain parts intrigued me even before I had submitted them to critical analysis. They have an irresistible attractiveness which is difficult to describe. In the course of 135 years the ArchkoVolume has made its own place in the apocryphal literature, among which – it must be said – a great deal of material exists that is worth less than the ink it is written with. Much of it, after an initially enthusiastic reception, has long disappeared from the shelves. But such does not appear to have been the case with this work of literature. It has the delicate patina of antiquity and genuineness. Let us now consider the question of provenance. Rev. Mahan introduces the subject as follows:

«« Some time in the year 1856, while living in De Witt, Missouri, a gentleman by the name of H. C. Whydaman became snow-bound and stopped at my house several days. He was a native of Germany, and one of the most learned men I had ever met. I found him to be freely communicative. During his stay, he told me that he had spent five years in the city of Rome, and most of the time in the Vatican, where he saw a library containing 560,000 volumes. He told me that he had seen and read the records of Tiberius Cæsar, and in what was called the Acta Pilati – that is, the acts of Pilate – he had seen an account of the apprehension, trial, and Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth; but said it did not add much to the commonly accepted teachings of Christianity. He told me, he thought a transcript could be secured. After Mr. Whydaman’s departure, I meditated upon what he had told me of those records, and thought that if a transcript could be obtained it would be very interesting, even if it did not add much to the present teachings of Christianity. »»

A few months later, Mahan received a letter from Whydaman:

«« It is with the kindest regards I remembered your hospitality while with you in America. Be assured, anything I can do for you will afford me great pleasure. I have written to Father Freelinhusen, a monk of great learning, at Rome, who is the chief guardian of the Vatican. I have made the request in my own name, as I do not think they would be willing for such a document to go into the hands of the public. »»

At the end of 1857, Mahan got a second letter from him:

«« Father Freelinhusen has answered my letter in regard to the transcript you want. He informs me that the writing is so fine, and being in the Latin language, as I told you, and the parchments so old and dirty, he will be obliged to use a glass to the most of it. He can only give it in the Latin, as he does not understand the English [to translate it into]. He says he will do it for thirty-five darics (4), which will be in American coin sixty-two dollars and forty-four cents. If you will forward the amount, I will have the document forwarded to my brother-in-law, C. C. Vantberger. He will translate it for a trifle. »»

After having paid Whydaman, Reverend Mahan tells that Whydaman sent a transcript of the Latin directly to Vantberger, who afterwards sent his translation to Rev. Mahan. No

mention is made that he also received the Latin transcript or that he ordered a thorough investigation by a competent expert of the manner of writing in the document. This could have revealed its authenticity. It is a pity that the Latin text was not published in the same book, for it is very difficult to fake a Latin text, presumably written by a Roman governor, due to the particularities of writing common to the age. (5)

Upon getting hold of the Acta Pilati via his connection Whydaman, Rev. Mahan, according to his own report, devoted many years studying this particular field, and then, after having procured the necessary assistance, he set sail for those foreign countries on a day in September 1883 in order to find additional documents of the kind and to have them translated – 26 years after he got hold of the Pilate report. Mr M. McIntosh who, together with Twyman, has done much of the translation work, testifies:

«« To my astonishment the first thing we called for was brought to hand in a short time. I mean Pilate's reports, which were more than satisfactory. The next were the Senate's records respecting the investigation of Herod Antipas on various charges [one of which was the execution of John the Baptist], the Hillel letters, and the Shammai laws [not published in the ArchkoVolume]. We then proceeded to Constantinople and went through the records of the Sanhedrin and Talmuds of the Jews that were carried there and preserved by Constantine in the year 337. Here we found Melker's report [who was priest at Bethlehem when Jesus was born] in respect to the prophecy concerning the birth of Jesus, which is very deep and profound. Next we came upon the report of Gamaliel... (...) Then the next thing we found was the report of Caiaphas to the Sanhedrin. When read it will awaken the minds of men and give a very different view on this matter to what we have had. After we had finished the report, Brother Mahan insisted that we should unwind the scroll further. In doing so we found his second report, which caused us to weep like children, and we both thanked God that we continued the search. »»

They brought home a rich harvest. We should not underestimate the School of Hillel letters regarding God's Providence to the Jews, kept in the Vatican, of which one was written during Jesus' public life, and an interesting one a few days after the Pentecost event or about 60 days after the Crucifixion, in which the writer shows some appreciation for Peter, the disciple of Jesus, at a time when there was not even mention of a sect:

«« Now, I wish my Jewish brethren to understand that I am not a follower of this Nazarene that has created so much strife among the people, neither do I endorse his new doctrines. Yet I think it would be well for us not to be too hasty in forming our conclusions on this or any other subject. »»

The School of Hillel letters are seven in number, which Rev. Mahan ascribes to Hillel the Third (a known Talmudic figure). The incipient just mentions: *"The Hillel letters regarding God's providence to the Jews, by Hillel the Third (these were translated and sent to me after my return home – Mahan)"* From the internal evidence it appears that it is impossible that all the letters were written by the same person. The first appears to have been written in 26 AD; the second in approximately 140 AD; the third in 45 AD; the fourth in 24 AD; the fifth and sixth letter are of uncertain date, but from the same epoch. The seventh, called "The Expectation of the Jews" is of uncertain date too, I would say from about the middle of the second century. It is actually not a letter but a kind of sermon/apologia by a Jew, who had become Christian. The first six letters comprise 30 pages and the last 19. Why Mahan calls them the letters of Hillel the Third is left to the imagination of the reader. Considering their outstanding quality from both the Christian and Judaic point of view, I call them the School of Hillel letters. The seventh I prefer to call "The Expectation of the Jews". That they all have a Christian quality does not detract from calling them the School of Hillel letters. It is known that the venerated Rabban Gamaliel, who founded the Hillel-school, was a Christian in spirit, even before

### ***Gamaliel the Elder, in spirit already a Christian***

Rabban Gamaliel is given the tribute of being one of the greatest Jewish teachers: *“Since Rabban Gamaliel the Elder died, there has been no more reverence for the law, and purity and abstinence died out at the same time.”* (Sotah 9:15) The title rabban belonged to the head of the Sanhedrin. Gamaliel himself was instructed by the outstanding teacher Simeon (from the Temple incident - Luke 2), and presumably the grandson (or son) of the famous Hillel. Because it is impossible to deny that Gamaliel once was head of the Sanhedrin and because it would have been considered a slap in the face that such a man converted to the Christian sect, Judaism continued to revere him as a great teacher while denying that he became a Christian. At about the time of Crucifixion the old man gradually became blind and from then on was not involved in the day-to-day business of the Sanhedrin, nor was he able to fulfill a prominent position in the Christian sect. Gamaliel had some famous pupils like Onkelos, who had idolatrous parents. Onkelos excelled so much that he was invited to the Sanhedrin. Saul of Tarsus - later to become the apostle Paul - was also Gamaliel's pupil. Saul led the mob that stoned Stephen to death because of his testimony. (Acts 7) Stephen is venerated as the first Christian martyr. That Saul of Tarsus, in spite of his saintly teacher, was so intolerant, is because Tarsus was then a bulwark of Jewish extremism, even worse than Jerusalem itself.

The Christian tradition and revelations by visionaries like Maria Valtorta and Anna Katharina Emmerick – to which I give more credence here than to the Talmud – relate that Stephen was buried in the precinct of Gamaliel, his teacher in former days. Although Gamaliel received Christian baptism several years after the Crucifixion (which Modernists deny), he already had become a Christian in his heart after he had heard Jesus in the Temple, when He was a boy of 12. (Luke 2) Some twenty years later he left the Sanhedrin on the eve of the Crucifixion, not wanting any part in his condemnation. At his death in the year 52 he was placed in Stephen's tomb, which by some miraculous intervention was discovered in the year 415. Gamaliel and his son Abibon have both been named saints. After the Vatican II Council (1962-65), the Modernists succeeded in removing them from the list of saints under the fallacious argument that no substantial evidence exists within the holy tradition of the Church. Here another case of obscuring history.

Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman presumably cites the Talmud that the Rabban, or Gamaliel the Elder, was behind the curse against the ‘minim’ or deviants. (“My People's Passover Haggadah” - Vol. 2 # 2008, p. 83) Instead, it was Gamaliel the Second who instituted the blessing against the deviants (the Hebrew for blessing and curse are the same), that once was spoken out in veiled fashion against the Judeo-Christians, and at a much later stage against the Christians from the Gentiles. This was formulated shortly after the Resurrection of our Lord by Little Samuel (Samuel Hakkaton), who participated in the Sanhedrin that condemned Jesus. After the first Jewish Revolt (66-73 AD), effectuating the tragic loss of the Temple, it was included in the Shemoneh (Ezre) or “Eighteen (things)”. Gamaliel the Second instituted that it had to be a mandatory prayer three times a day for all the faithful. It was an effective means to arrive at a unification of the Jewish body, now that the Temple and its rituals had lost its focus of attention. Since a nineteenth prayer was added very soon afterwards, the Shemoneh changed name and became known as the Amidah (because prayed in upright position) or ‘the’ Tefillah (intercession). It is still one of the most important in Jewish ritual practice.

The three prayers of praise at the beginning and the three of thanksgiving at the end were prescribed by the Men of the Great Synagogue, somewhere in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century before Christ. The twelve in the middle were modelled as an anti-type to Moses' twelve curses at the beginning of the renewed covenant ceremony (Deut. 27:14-26); the twelfth, the only curse, is known as the “berakat ha-minim” (minim are deviants or apostates). The Shemoneh/Amidah were often adapted to reflect the requirements of the time. (6)

he joined the Jesus-sect. The Hillel school of thought, that came into existence in the decades before Christ was born, can realistically be considered as the tilling of the ground before the advent of the Anointed One (the Messiah). Would not God till the fields?

One should expect that these findings caused waves of sensation in scientific circles. Here were intriguing revelations about Biblical history and the roots of Christianity. Hidden in libraries these precious texts had survived the ravages of time, to speak to us across two millennia of Christian civilisation. They have survived their authors and will survive us – their readers. Contrary to popular view, these documents make a valuable contribution to the understanding of Holy Script, as I have demonstrated under Part II under “The Messianic Expectation as Motivation for the Crucifixion of Christ”. But instead of provoking fascination by learned scholars, no student of religion has ever undertaken a serious investigation of the texts themselves, which until now have been scrutinized only to find mistakes. Science is by nature objective. Scientists are by nature subjective. For a man to be objective requires effort. There can be a great expanse, sometimes, between what is professed and what is done. The reasoning is not always stringent, because ideologically paralyzed (by a protection mechanism that minimizes the so-called cognitive dissonance). The mind may, furthermore, be inhibited by stubbornness, ambition and pride, especially pride – I speak of men of science.

### ***3 – The verdict was quickly settled***

As said, in 1856 Reverend Mahan met someone who introduced himself by the name of Whydaman, which appears to be a false name, although Mahan never suspected it. As James Irsay pointed out: “*Whydaman is, except for the ‘y’ an exact anagram of W. D. Mahan. Why the ‘y’? Maybe we are not supposed to ask ‘y’!*” Here the saga begins. Three years later Mahan received a translation of Pilate’s Report, in the follow-up of that meeting. Another twenty years later Rev. Mahan published a brochure of 33 pages, entitled “A Correct Transcript of Pilate’s Court”. And in 1884 Reverend Mahan self-published the first version of the ArchkoVolume, entitled “The archaeological writings of the Sanhedrim and Talmuds of the Jews, taken from the ancient parchments and scrolls at Constantinople and the Vatican at Rome, being the record made by the enemies of Jesus of Nazareth in his day: the most interesting history ever read by man.” This included an expanded version of “Pilate’s Court” plus a series of other texts as indicated in the title, which are still included in the present editions, except for “Eli’s story of the Magi”, that made up a quarter of the first edition (almost 90 pages).

Questions were raised how it was that “Eli and the Story of the Magi”, as contained in chapter VIII, was at points word-for-word identical with the 1880 novel “Ben-Hur”, a novel by Lew Wallace that later became a tremendous bestseller. Not all was a literal transcript. The story of the wise men (the Magi) is in a different context than Wallace’s story, which neatly fits the Biblical narrative. Eli’s story, however, is placed at the beginning of Jesus’ public life and is in the form of a hearing in front of the Sanhedrin, of which the document would be an eyewitness account. Mahan’s stay in Constantinople during the fall of 1883 was after the publication of Ben-Hur in 1880. Coincidentally Lew Wallace was appointed Ambassador to Turkey from 1881 until 1885. Because Wallace had never before been to the Holy Land (or Turkey) before the writing of his book, he began research to familiarize himself with the area’s geography and its history at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. We are talking 1873. (This we can find in the book of Barbara Olenyik Morrow: “From Ben-Hur to Sister Carrie – Remembering the lives and works of five Indiana authors” # 1995.) On that scholarly basis he could write “Ben-Hur: a Tale of the Christ”. Undeniably, the testimony of Wallace concerning the authorship is trustworthy, and – accepting that also Mahan spoke the truth – Eli’s story must have been planted in the Sophian library. Would the enemies of Christ go that far in their plot to blemish the original manuscripts? Why not? It has been that way during

two thousand years of Christianity. Not only do they kill Christians, they also try to cover up their primary texts. *“Were Jesus Christ to walk the Earth at this time, He would be assassinated. No official in His Church would accept Him. He would become a laughing stock, then feared and so despised that they would have Him crucified, just as before.”* (BOT Febr. 7, 2014) And let’s be honest, would Mahan be so stupid and immoral to steal the intellectual property of Wallace while on the other hand he got a rich booty from ancient texts, handed over to him from the libraries in Rome and Constantinople? I don’t think so. It defies logic.

In the first of the School of Hillel letters is written: *“This has been the fault of us Jews at all times. No odds what good was done, if it was not done just as the priest thought it ought to be done, it was wrong.”* I extend the reasoning to: This has been the fault of men of standing of all times. No odds what good was done, if it was not done just as the authority thought it ought to be done, it was wrong. For the ArchkoVolume the verdict was quickly settled. Rev. Mahan was typified as a moron and a crook. However, the one does not necessarily follow from the other. This was the first mistake in the evaluation of the ArchkoVolume. Also, having proved that Gamaliel’s Interview is a fraud, and that “Eli and the Story of the Magi” was tailor-made by Lew Wallace, does not prove that all are a fraud, or that Rev. Mahan was at fault. Who committed the fraud? The documents themselves were quickly perused and relegated to the pseudoepigrapia ...at best. Pseudoepigrapia are writings from the beginning of our Christian era ascribed to someone other than their real authors, who have written under a famous name with a view to gain authority for what was written, which practice was quite common at the time. Besides, who had heard of a Reverend Mahan of Boonville?! Perhaps God and the angels in his royal court. Is not it written (1 Cor. 1:27-28):

«« God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised, God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to naught the things that are. »»

Mahan tells that people objected that it was unlikely he found these documents so easily because they have been searched for by many scholars and could not be found, but to his surprise, for one reason or another, no one had given the matter serious consideration. He was wrong: they had discovered the documents but considered them an embarrassment. To proclaim Christ and pretend being a Christian is different from believing in Him, for if Jesus really exists it challenges our way of life. It challenges the individual’s presumption in seeking the attributes of God. Isn’t that what science is about? I like to point out that finding something easily does not prove that it was an easy find. If it was found easily we should first ask why, and not decry. The problem is not that Mahan found the documents easily, but that he was ‘allowed’ to find the documents easily.

#### ***4 – In a way not easy to imagine...***

One critical review of the ArchkoVolume at Amazon.com, of a total of twenty (as of May 16, 2008), reads: *“You will not find anything that contradicts the Bible in it, but it will disturb your own beliefs.”* (Rick Dahl, San Lorenzo, USA) Another: *“I was introduced to this book around twenty years ago. Over the years, I have given away several dozen copies. I use this book as an opening to share my faith. It blesses all who read it.”* (Gregory Drake, Rolling Meadows, USA)

The well known appraisals of the two competent scholars M.R. James and Edgar J. Goodspeed appear to be biased. James calls it *“disgusting”* and Goodspeed talks about it in this vein: *“...the general color (...) often suggests the wild hysterical remorse of George Croly’s Wandering Jew Salathiel.”* Dr. Goodspeed, whom I respect as a theolo-



gian, calls Dr. Paul Schmiedel “*the distinguished scholar from Zürich*”, in order to prove his point, but this Schmiedel was of the opinion that there are only nine passages in the Gospels that we can depend upon as being the sayings of Jesus. (7) I refuse to call such a man ‘distinguished’. James and Goodspeed look at the documents at a glance and discuss at length the shortcomings of Mahan. He had many and they were easy to find. Dr. Goodspeed calls him “*this uneducated man*”. I agree he was gullible, inaccurate, lacked a proper education for the field of work, and that his intellect was not up to the task. Yet he was a man of faith and his shortcomings were more than compensated by an enormous zeal and great integrity (yes!). The documents themselves are a different matter. A wise man can find a raw diamond and still call it a little rock. A stupid man can find a raw diamond and call it a diamond, but he can also find a little rock and call it a diamond (a wise man not); he can find five little rocks and five raw diamonds and call them all diamonds. But the rocks in the sample don’t prove that the raw diamonds are a fake. That which is brought into the limelight should be considered on its own merits and not on the inadequacies of the lucky finder. The ArchkoVolume documents merit a closer look than allowed for by these two gentlemen.

Clearly, Mahan’s work was not done just as the authorities thought it ought to be done. Perhaps that is why James and Goodspeed were biased ‘in disfavour’ of the documents. Why not start with a bias ‘in favour’ of the documents, as I am doing? The appraisals of James and Goodspeed are there for all to see. I suggest you read them, because they contain good points, which I do not need to reiterate. M.R. James makes an interesting observation, which lends support to my angle of attack:

«« What is the meaning of it [the ArchkoVolume]? Why was it written? The person calling himself Reverend Mahan is not mad, so far as I can see. The book is too coherent and too dull to make that hypothesis a probable one. It is just possible that Drs. McIntosh of Scotland and Twyman of England, both ‘of the Antiquarian Lodge, Genoa, Italy’ may in some way, not easy to imagine, have practised upon his frank intelligence. Whether that is so or not, it is clear that an engaging simplicity is a prominent feature in the character of Mahan. »»

He contradicts himself in the closing statement of his article:

«« Its prosperous appearance seems to indicate that in certain circles it has met with some little success. That any measure of success at all is far beyond its deserts, this article has tried to show. There is no doubt whatever that it is an extremely bad book. »»

I disagree that the book is dull. It is coherent, yes, in stark contrast with the 50 pages of introductions, provided by Rev. Mahan, who by all accounts was not brilliant. This, M.R. James subscribes:

«« The rest of the introduction is not characterised by so much brilliancy. We will pass over it, and come to the newly discovered documents. But we must deal with them very shortly, for it must be confessed that they are by far the least interesting part of the book. »»

By far the least interesting? How presumptuous! From the sixth School of Hillel letter:

«« The sun is perhaps the brightest emblem of God, except the human soul [an idea also expressed by St Chrysostom]. To us ‘he’ is, in fact, the mightiest instrument, as it were, the right hand of the benignity of the Most High. He riseth, and the shadows of night flee away. Joy and beauty go forth to meet him in the morning. At his call universal life riseth, as it were, from a universal death. He draweth aside the curtains of darkness and sayeth unto man: ‘Come forth!’ He shineth, and the face of nature is glad. He hideth his face, and all things mourn. He



withdraweth from the western sky, and darkness resumes her ancient dominion, and all things seem to wait his return. »»

It is impossible that a mediocre intelligence could have concocted these. To give an example, which, among other things, shows why they are despised by the enemies of the true God: (from the sixth School of Hillel letter)

«« But then, even in the best minds the subject was surrounded with great doubt and difficulties. God himself is an object of none of the senses. It is in vain, therefore, for the human mind to form an idea of the mode of his existence. Not being, then, a matter of sense or of demonstration, the wisest of men, though he might arrive at the truth, could not feel sure that it was truth. Wanting certainty himself, he could not impart certainty to others. He could not propagate his doctrine with confidence. The wisest of men, therefore, wanted that authority, which was requisite even for the propagation of the truth. They wanted certainty for themselves and authority for others. Now, certainty and authority are the very things necessary to make a religion powerful in the world. While religion, therefore, was in the hands of the philosophers – that is, the thinkers – it effected next to nothing in guiding and restraining mankind, it being merely a matter of opinion that is, of dim probability. One man felt that he had just as good a right to his opinion as another. One philosopher differed from another, and thus weakened the authority of the opinions of both. A religion, therefore, in the true sense of the word that is, one that shall take hold of the faith and control the conduct of humankind, must have both certainty and authority. Neither can be obtained without revelation, inspiration and miracles. »»

Taking this into consideration, it seems that M.R. James hits the nail on the head when he says that it is just possible that people in some way have practised upon Mahan's frank intelligence. I will now venture in that direction.

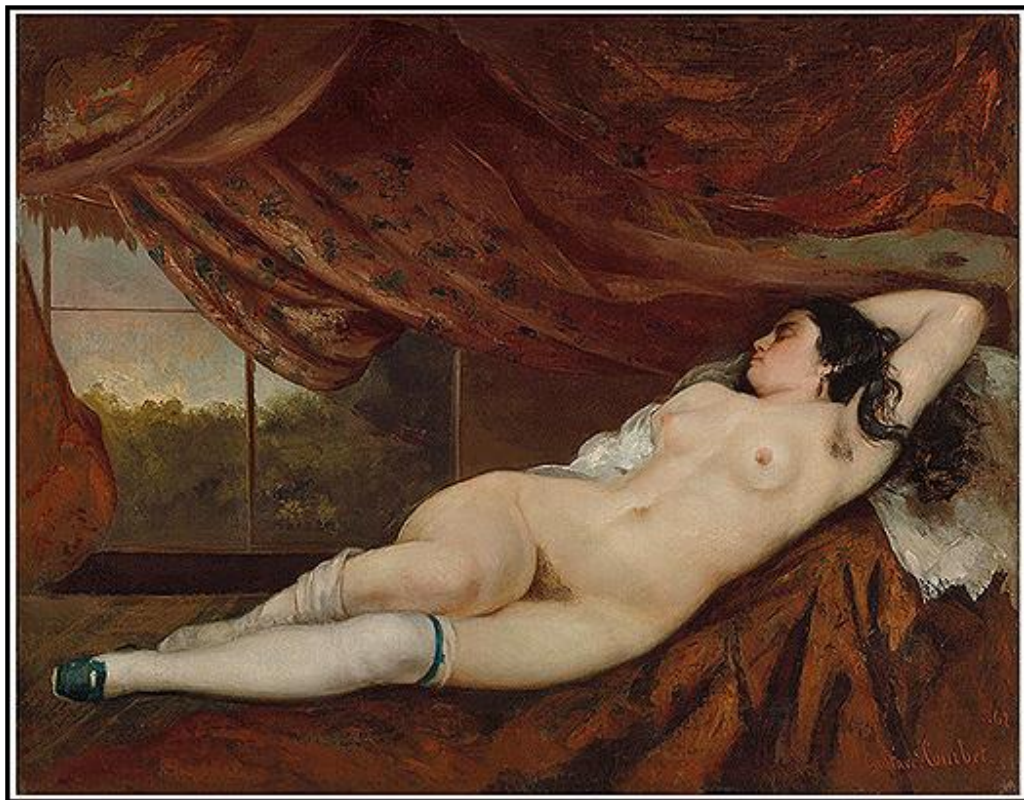
### ***5 – Truth, given the appearance of falsity***

The question remains: "Would the documents have caused waves of sensation in scientific circles if they had been presented competently?" I really wonder. If even the engaging appearance of Jesus during his public life met such opposition, and not the least from the religious authorities, and if in the century following his death everything was done to remove every mention of Him in the profane writings, it should come as no surprise that proofs of the historicity of events related to Jesus' life and death should be regarded as repugnant by certain type of persons, even in our times. Otherwise why would Whydaman, whom he pretended to be – who was said by Mahan to be one of the most learned men he had ever met – have taken him into his confidence? Why allow someone else, so uneducated and so naïve, to run off with the honours? "*It is clear that an engaging simplicity is a prominent feature in the character of Mahan*", so R. J. James said. But that's not something that advances you in science. It cannot be otherwise than an attempt to discredit the documents (which here I've proven to be genuine). Constantine Simonides attempted to make out in a clumsy way that the "Codex Sinaiticus" was a forgery. (8) There are better ways...

As with all successful disinformation, distortions have to be placed within a wider context of truth, which can be in two possible ways: to give the distortions the appearance of truth or to give the truth the appearance of falsehood. The appearance of falsehood pretends to be the real thing, while careful observation would show that the truth is hidden behind it. It is the reverse of what we are accustomed to, and therefore this forgery is so difficult to detect. A false picture is not the picture of its supposed object, but of another object, depicted by another and truer picture. This is what happened to the Archko-

Volume. The perpetrators, who tried to give truth the appearance of falsity, failed, for they did not perceive that the documents would continue to speak for themselves. They could not change the objects themselves, for they were hidden in safe places, the libraries, ready to be discovered again. By discrediting the ancient manuscripts and by referring to them in some spurious way, the truth could be hidden forever. (9) At least that is what the perpetrators of this crime tried to accomplish.

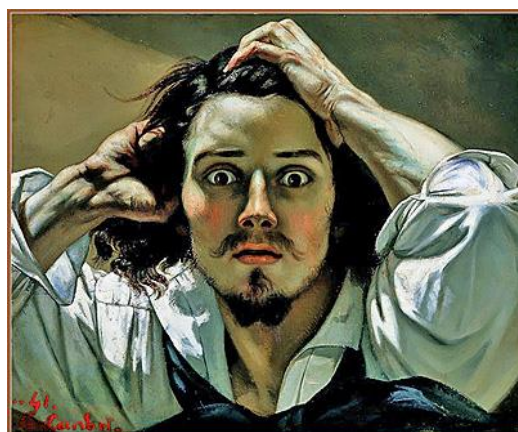
A remarkable incident illustrates my point. It regards the discovery of a piece of art that had been missing for a long time, because falsely considered a common work of art. Kept in an inappropriate frame, it gave the appearance of being nothing special. The masterpiece by famous painter Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) was believed stolen by either the Nazis or the Red Army. The story goes that in the early months of 1945, as the Red Army advanced across Eastern Europe, a group of Russian soldiers banged on the door of a doctor in a village near Bratislava. Their commander was very ill. To pay for the treatment they had a rolled-up painting. The Russians, who could have forced the doctor to work at gunpoint, gave the painting and left. The doctor put the canvas, with a portrait of a reclining nude, inside a cheap glass-covered frame, which gave it the appearance of



*La femme nue couchée, by Gustave Courbet (1862)*

being something cheap. And he put it on a wall of his home. Nothing was heard of the “Femme Nue Couchée” (naked woman laying on a couch) for decades. In 2000, a Slovakian antique dealer, operating through an American middleman in Prague, contacted Christie’s auction house. In 2007 the painting was returned to the rightful heirs, and in 2015 it was sold at Christie’s for more than USD 15 million. The median personal income at the time in the US was just above USD 30,000 annually. USD 15 million is five hundred times that amount. Charles Goldstein, an attorney for the Commission for Art Recovery, commented: “*Whether the family realised just how valuable the painting was, is unclear. (...) The old man might not have known what he had for many years but, at some point, I suspect, the family did know.*”

This illustrates that a false appearance may detract from true value. That is the story of the ArchkoVolume. We could say that M.R. James and Edgar Goodspeed did a good job in investigating the ‘framework’ but they forgot to look at the ‘painting’. They have proven their point. It is a cheap and inappropriate framework. I herewith take note of it.



**Gustave Courbet (self-portrait)**

To set up the fraudulent scheme the perpetrators had to find a gullible victim, sufficiently naive and unassuming as to give the documents the appearance of falsity. When so-called Whydaman asked Mahan to pay the ridiculous 35 darics, pretending that it was a papal currency (4), he tested his gullibility while at the same time it would give ‘proof’ to the outside world that Pilate’s Report was a scam. Reverend Mahan passed the test and was consequently awarded its translation (take note, he did not receive the Latin version). At a later stage he had access to the ancient manuscripts by means of letters of reference. One might ask why? The answer is hatred, hatred against Christ, who is hated beyond measure and without cause. They are many and mighty, who like to destroy, being enemies wrongfully. (Ps. 69:4)

I can vouch for the difficulties experienced in obtaining the proper letters of introduction. It was no different then. The translator “*was very much surprised [so tells Mahan], when I showed him my notes of reference. He did not see how I could get hold of these things so far away.*” For a layman it is impossible to enter those libraries, not less so for a Protestant minister, especially then. They are even hardly accessible to Roman Catholic men of science. Everything points to a plot, with the object of discrediting the documents. I believe the perpetrators had great fun in setting up the scheme, ...and it met with gratifying success. From this we can – nay, must – conclude that the plan to mislead can never have been undertaken as an individual action. There must have been some sort of conspiracy, with prominent names from the scientific establishment being involved. There must at least have been some form of collaboration by highly placed individuals in the Vatican. People happen to get leading positions in the scientific world not because of their moral qualities; that is rather a handicap. This type of fraud cannot be excluded at the outset. It is of a type that the Freemasons seem to specialise in. There was “the permanent instruction of the Alta Vendita Lodge” that goes back to 1819, to infiltrate the Roman Church, a Freemasonic plan, which since then was pursued vigorously.

To forbid access to the manuscripts under consideration, lying in the Vatican and Istanbul, was not difficult and not something that called for the setting up of an elaborate scheme. Another factor may have come into play. One should always allow for the existence of copies, for in ancient times the copying of important documents was customary. At some time such a copy, or parts of it, might show up during a routine excavation or discovery in some library. These manuscripts also had to be discredited. Here an example. You may have heard about the ongoing discussion on what Jesus looked like. Was He Caucasian or did He look like an Arab sheik? (10) The visionary Maria Valtorta (1897-1961) describes Him in the “Poem of the Man-God” as having golden blonde hair and bright blue eyes. This has been criticised. To defend the case, the Maria Valtorta website mentions that in 1964 a tablet with a message from Pontius Pilate to Tiberius Cæsar was recovered in an archæological find. The tablet describes Jesus as having gold-coloured hair, in more or less the same terms as in the Poem of the Man-God and in the ArchkoVolume. I have not been able to find specific details on this find, which should have been



reported in some archæological journal. It could be one of those manuscripts which the perpetrators of the scheme wished to discredit beforehand.

Such a plot works because of the arrogance of people in high positions, who fail to recognize a raw diamond when not lying in its proper place. Arrogance blinds. Says Proverbs: *“Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”* And yet, Dr. Goodspeed and M. R. James made valuable contributions to science and I would have been glad to have had them as teachers. But still they failed to recognize the raw diamond when they found one. Goodspeed sneers at the public: *“The whole work (Pilate’s Report) is a weak, crude fancy, a jumble of high-sounding but meaningless words, and hardly worth serious criticism. It is difficult to see how it could have deceived anyone. The strangest part of the story is that it did deceive a great many people.”* The general public may be deceived for a considerable time, ...but for 135 years? In spite of the devastating criticism by reputable men it remains in demand. One might say, the public is not that foolish after all – they have rejected the other apocrypha, but these they stubbornly cling to. Goodspeed owes an apology to the general public. (11)

I call arrogant that the documents presented by Reverend Mahan were not submitted to a scientific examination but were rejected a priori – for this is what happened. James and Goodspeed had the capacity for carrying out a solid piece of research. They failed to do so, I think not out of ill-will but carelessness. Due to their established reputations they have put many on the wrong track. Goodspeed states that the reputable William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, which still exists (12), published the ArchkoVolume more than once, in the face of serious protest. These publications might be one of the reasons why the ArchkoVolume continued to attract interest in Christian circles and why Goodspeed felt obliged to give a crushing verdict. I have no wish to describe as arrogant everyone who rejects the ArchkoVolume. In the end, it is the ArchkoVolume itself that causes confusion, which happened to be the objective of the perpetrators of the evil deed. Rev. Mahan was abused. It was a heavy cross for him when rejected and mocked at. Eerdmans was persistent in spite of James’s criticism, who had a good reputation. Perhaps James knew Eerdmans personally (they lived fairly close to one another) and he tried to dissuade him from publishing it. But after having taken cognisance of the ArchkoVolume, Eerdmans apparently came to the conclusion that it was not necessarily a forgery.

## ***6 – A discussion of Gamaliel’s Interview (the Pseudo-Gamaliel)***

Mahan was summoned before church authorities in September 1885 on charges of falsehood and plagiarism. The New Lebanon Presbytery tried the case at length, and Lew Wallace at the occasion also gave testimony. Three years later Mahan published an edition of 248 pages, now called for the first time “The Archko Volume”. Since then all editions are identical to this one of 1887. No new material was added; it was a reproduction of the 1884 edition of 352 pages, but thoughtfully it omitted the story of the Magi that made up a quarter of the 1884 edition. The question of “The Story of the Magi” is covered in the “Three Appraisals of the ArchkoVolume” (pp. 57-84).

In spite of the crushing verdict, later to be followed by the vicious attacks of James and Goodspeed, the ArchkoVolume has never been out of print for long and is still readily available. In one way or another it has continued to fascinate in spite of its *“disgusting nature”*, to quote Montague James. On the contrary, I consider it highly valuable. I agree, one particular document is disgusting. It has all the ingredients of being a fraud.

I am talking about “Gamaliel’s interview with Joseph and Mary and others concerning Jesus”. According to the interview, John the Baptist was preaching already, but Jesus, then about 26 years of age, had not started his public mission yet. The incipient reads:

«« The hagiographa or holy writings, found in the St. Sophia Mosque at Constantinople, made by Gamaliel, in the recorded teachings of the Jews. It seems Gamaliel was asked by the Sanhedrin to interrogate Joseph and Mary in regard to their child Jesus. »»

If the document turns out to be a forgery, it remains to be seen who did the forging. It need not be Rev. Mahan. Forgeries are of all times and this could be one of those ancient pseudo-epigraphia. Such a counterfeit is for various reasons ascribed to a famous person. A recent case of it, with the evident objective of earning money, were the Hitler diaries, announced to the world in 1983. This generated a great frenzy. (13) Gamaliel's Interview, which henceforth I will call the "Pseudo-Gamaliel" is of a different kind.

The first sentence reads: *"I found Joseph and Mary in the city of Mecca, in the land of Ammon or Moab."* As I will show, there is a snag in the grass. Moab is the historical name for the strip of land running along the Eastern shore of the Dead Sea. In ancient days it was home to the kingdom of the Moabites, a people often in conflict with their Israelite neighbours to the West. The report of the interview was written in Hebrew. It remains to be seen, but Mecca could be the translation of Maq or Meq (mem, coph), which in Hebrew means a 'melting' such as with putridity and rottenness. It also means to stink. This was obviously written to put the Holy Family in a less than favourable light. Mahan knew that they stayed in Nazareth. Even children know. How could he have invented such a thing? He was not a moron! He was a God-fearing man and not inclined to defame the Christian creed. Everything in the letter indicates that it was written shortly after the Crucifixion and then filed in the Temple archives, patiently waiting to be revealed at the appropriate time; that the Temple and its archives would be destroyed during the war, some forty years later, they did not expect. There were no Gospels as yet and the Christian sect was in its birth pangs, so the author of the interview could have imagined that people would accept the fantasy of the whereabouts of the Holy Family. We continue the report of the interview:

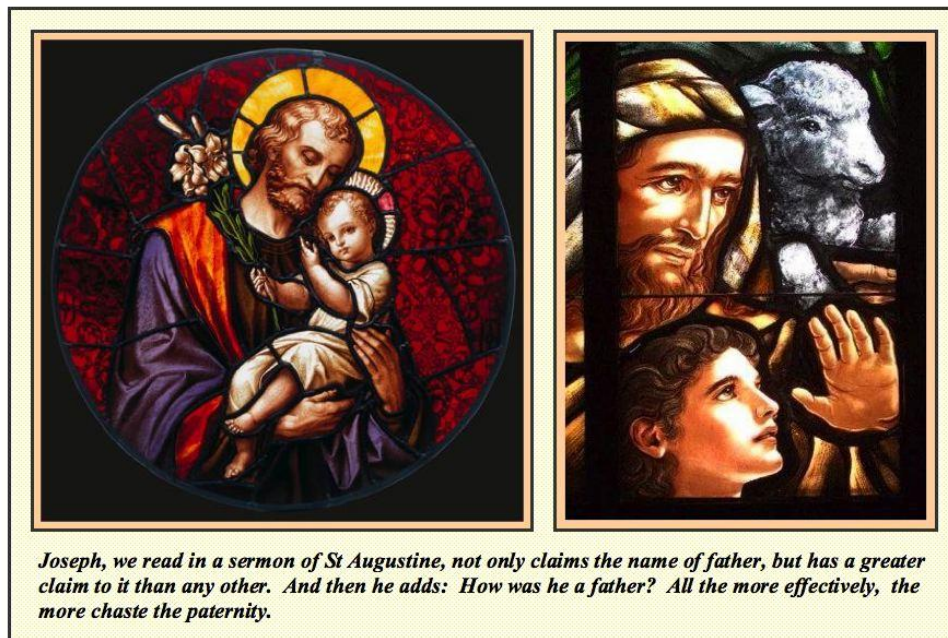
«« Joseph is a carpenter. He is very tall and ugly. His hair looks as though it might have been dark auburn when young. His eyes are gray and vicious. He is anything but prepossessing in his appearance, and he is as gross and glum as he looks. He is but a poor talker, and it seems that yes and no are the depth of his mind. I am convinced that he is very disagreeable to his family. (...) His father's name was Jacob and his grandfather's was Matthew. »»

This accords with the Talmud, who sees Joseph as Mary's paramour, a man driven by base instincts. Robert Herford explains the matter at hand in "Christianity in Talmud and Midrash" # 1903: *"The Talmud often calls Jesus the Son of Stada, as people say in Pumbeditha – a Babylonian town with a famous Rabbinical College: 'S'tath-da', or 'she has gone aside (from her husband)'. Miriam descended from princes and rulers and yet she played the harlot with a lowly carpenter. Stada is a nickname derived from her unfaithfulness to her husband, who would have been Pappus ben Jehudah."* (pp. 37, 48, 355)

To be effective, the distortions, intended to defame the Christian sect, had to be placed within a wider context of truth, such as perceived by the public. Joseph's father was indeed Jacob, and his grandfather Mattan, which can be translated as Matthew. (Mt. 1:15-16) The Catholic Encyclopedia states that we may well suppose that Jesus' foster-father died before the beginning of his public life. It could be reasoned that very few people had ever met him. Very few could use personal experience to deny the gloomy picture of Mary's husband. Much later, the Gospels would describe him as a just man. The children mentioned need not be Mary's children. The Wycliffe Bible Dictionary calls James, Joseph, Simon and Judah (Mt. 13:55) the half-brothers of Jesus, which means (according to that source) that Mary had married a widower, someone older. Indeed:

*“His hair looks as though it might have been dark auburn when young.”* If so, these things ought to have been general knowledge. Why deny what is generally known? And here lies the importance of the document. One only needs to cast doubt on that which is uncertain in the public mind in order to accomplish one’s evil designs.

Things turn out differently according to the gospel as told by Maria Valtorta. She tells that Joseph was a good looking man in the strength of life and 15 to 20 years older than the Virgin Mary. He was well-proportioned and had regular facial features, a large forehead and soft eyes, almost black, a slightly bent small nose and rosy cheeks. He was of a robust appearance and not very large. Alphæus was the eldest brother of Joseph who had four sons, called the ‘brothers of the Lord’ of whom two were to become apostle; their spouses were the ‘sisters of the Lord’. (14) According to Valtorta, Joseph died about two years before Jesus started his public life. That Joseph, if not a widow, was more than 30 years old at the time of his engagement is to be considered exceptional, as in those days Jewish men used to marry and had to marry at a young age. However, Joseph had made a vow of chastity and it was only because of some turn of events that the two were brought together. (source: “Dictionnaire des Personnage de L’Évangile selon Maria Valtorta” by René Laurentin and others # 2012).



Joseph is made to say that Jesus was a failure from the beginning – a hopeless case:

«« I am fearful we are mistaken! Jesus seems to take no interest in us, nor anything else much. I call him lazy and careless. I don’t think he will ever amount to much, much less be a king. If this is going to happen, he must do a great deal better than he has been doing. »»

As concerns Jesus birth in Bethlehem, the supposed Joseph gives a preposterous answer to the question if something strange occurred to him when the child was born, which again casts doubt on Jesus’ divine mission:

«« People were much excited, but I was so tired that I had gone to sleep and saw nothing. Toward day several priests came in to see us and the babe, and gave many presents. The news got circulated that this child was to be King of the Jews. It created so much excitement that I took the child and his mother and went to Moab for protection, for fear the Romans would kill the child to keep it from being a rival to the Romans. »»

Again Moab! Apparently the religious caste, who concocted the interview, did not know at the time of writing that the Holy Family went into hiding in Egypt and later, after the Temple incident when Jesus was twelve years old, they went into hiding in India, Persia, Egypt, Greece and England; during the so-called ‘missing years’ of Jesus. (41)

In the interview, we see that the priests are not at fault, as they came to bring presents ...the priests are never at fault! The Gospels tell otherwise. This is pure fantasy.

The attention now focuses on Mary after first having sneered at Joseph. Says so-called Gamaliel: *“His ideas were of a selfish kind. All he thought of was himself.”* We are on the second page of the report:

«« Mary is altogether a different type. She is too noble to be the wife of such a man. She seems to be about forty or forty-five years of age, abounds with a cheerful and happy spirit and is full of happy fancies. (...) Her father’s name was Eli, and her mother’s name was Anna. Her grandmother’s name was Pennel [Phanuel], a widow of the tribe of Asher, of great renown. »»

The Talmud confirms that Mary’s father was Heli (her earlier ancestor was Joachim). Pennel could very well be the Phanuel mentioned in Luke 2:36-38. Her daughter Hanna spoke of Jesus in the Temple to all those who looked for the redemption in Jerusalem. According to the Gospel, she was about 84 years of age. The Virgin Mary was about 17 when this happened. Mathematically speaking, Phanuel had to be the great-grandmother of Mary. At the same time, her great-grandmother was the grandmother of Joseph. Hanna must have been from Phanuel’s first marriage. That the common grandmother of Joseph and Mary was the Phanuel of the Bible is new to me. In that case Hanna, the prophetess, was Mary’s aunt. In my Bible commentary Phanuel is considered to be a man, but in the Strong’s Concordance she is considered a woman. The name means: ‘beholding the face of God’ or ‘contemplation’. For more details on these questions, see the article at the end of this book: “The Panin Bible Statistics”.

Mary, *“full of happy fancies”*, despaired:

«« He takes so little interest in the things of the world and the great questions of the day that we are beginning to despair of him ever amounting to much – much less be a king, as the angel said he would be. »»

The interviewer summarizes:

«« Thus it seems that Joseph and Mary have both lost all confidence in him becoming anything. They seem to think that the Sanhedrin should do something for him to get him out and let him show himself to the people. I tried to console them by telling that my understanding of the prophecy was that he should come to the high priesthood first, and there work in the spiritual dominion of the heart, and when he would have brought about a unity of heart and oneness of aim, it would be easy enough to establish his political claims. As concerns all those who would not willingly submit to him, it would be an easy matter, with the sword of Joshua or Gideon, to bring them under his control. It seems to me that his parents’ ideas are of a selfish character, that they care nothing about the Jewish government nor the Roman oppression. All they think of is self-exaltation. They try to personally benefit from their son’s greatness. »»

How cute! The priests had understood Jesus’ mission (remember, they brought presents to the newborn babe) and were willing to sponsor him from the very beginning, but Jesus’ ‘third-rate’ parents had spoiled it! As already stated, the priests are never at fault! In this scenario, Jesus was the unfortunate victim of over-ambitious parents. Sounds familiar.



Jesus' teacher, to whom he often went, is someone called Massalian – *“a man of very deep thought and most profound judgement”*. Massalian fully agrees with so-called Gamaliel:

«« Jesus teaches that men and the flowers and birds drink from the same fountain and are fed by the same table, yet at the same time he seems to do everything to arise suspicion and prejudice. We are watching him to see his divine mission commence, and yet, he is continually frustrating our expectations as well as mocking our common sense and desires. When a man separates himself from the people, both as regards doctrine and discipline, he takes a very great risk on his part, especially when he confines God to one channel that happens to be his own fabrication. A person that assumes these responsible positions ought to have vast resources from which to draw, or he will sink in the whirlpool his own impertinence created. »»

Wow! Now I am reassured. It was not only because of his over-ambitious parents! It was also because of Jesus' *“impertinence”* that all went awry. No wonder *“that his own parents have become disgusted with him and have almost cast him off.”*

The name Massalian is a strange one. For a person's name, it does not have a Hebrew ring. At best, but unlikely, it is Syriac (mšallyānā, meaning 'one who prays') and that one only came into use in the 4<sup>th</sup> century as a name for an heretical Christian sect. The Hebrew 'mashal' (mem, shin, lamed) means parable or proverb. Turns out there was a proverb in those days *“He has taken ship for Massalia”*, to indicate someone who was a homosexual. Massalía is the ancient Greek colony on the site of modern Marseille, in those days marked by licentiousness, as was the case of many ports. Yet, Massalía seems to have built a reputation for it. (15) In the interview, Jesus' lack of interest in the female side of the human race is overemphasized, while the girls were fond of him. Puzzling. The implication is clear.

A little different is the insidious remark: *“Jesus' words sound so much like the teachings of Hillel or Shammai that I have to call them 'teachings', though he had no particular scholars [who educated him].”* This cannot be so, as the two schools were in constant conflict with each other. This presentation of facts is meant to give weight to the Jewish effort, until this day, to deny that Rabban Gamaliel ever became a Christian. That is also why the fake interview was in the name of this great man. In Caiaphas' Apology – he evidently being a Shammaite – it is correctly stated:

«« Jesus embraced the humanitarian precepts of the Hillelites, presenting conspicuously the cosmopolitan spirit of Judaism, and he did it almost in the words of Hillel, who taught it before. (...) Jesus, it seems, found in this Hillelite school a party furnished to hand, ready to take up his heresy – and a large party they are – almost capable to divide the whole Jewish commonwealth. (...) Jesus' conduct was so strange and incompatible with the interest of the Jews as a nation, that it seemed to me that he was a subject employed by the Romans to keep the Jews submissive and obedient to all their tyranny and abuse. This policy was most powerfully attacked by the officiating priest, by the Shammaites and Zealots. »»

As pointed out earlier, the distortions have to be placed within a wider context of truth. The interview is situated at the beginning of John the Baptist's mission, while Jesus still had to appear. Near the end of the interview we learn that *“Jesus was to be born of the virgin in Bethlehem some 26 years earlier”* [He started his public life at age 30 and died at 33.] From an unexpected angle this confirms that Jesus' Crucifixion took place seven years after the beginning of John's mission. This chronology is set forth in Part II *“When was Christ born?”* and its sequel *“The Messianic Expectation as Motivation for the Crucifixion of Christ”*. I am the first to establish that John's mission started four years earlier



than that of Jesus, instead of a few months, as hitherto thought. The statement of Jesus' age at the time of the interview strongly supports my conclusion as concerns Jesus' date of birth. Conversely it certifies that the Pseudo-Gamaliel has to be very ancient.

If indeed the Pseudo-Gamaliel was written shortly after the Crucifixion, it had to give a correct description of Jesus, for many had known Him personally. About Joseph they could give a wrong picture because he had died already before Jesus started his mission:

«« There is something about him that distinguishes him from him from everyone else. He is the picture of his mother, only he has not her smooth, round face. His hair is a little more golden than hers, though it is as much from sunburn as anything else. He is tall and his shoulders are a little drooped. His visage is thin and of a swarthy complexion, though this is from exposure to the sun. His eyes are large and a soft blue, and rather dull and heavy. The lashes are long, and his eyebrows very large. His nose is that of a Jew. In fact, he reminds me of an old-fashioned Jew in every sense of the word. »»

The above suits the description of Pontius Pilate, a memorable one:

«« One day in passing by the place of Siloé, where there was a great concourse of people, I [Pontius Pilate] observed in the midst of the group a young man who was leaning against a tree, calmly addressing the multitude. I was told it was Jesus. This I could easily have suspected, so great was the difference between him and those listening to him. His golden-colored hair and beard gave to his appearance a celestial aspect. He appeared to be about thirty years of age. Never have I seen a sweeter or more serene countenance. What a contrast between him and his hearers, 'with their black beards and tawny complexions!' »»

One lovely description of Jesus is to be found in a letter to the ruler of Rome by so-called Lentulus, who, we are told, was a resident of Judeah in the days of Tiberius. The letter first appeared in publications in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and many believe it to be a forgery, and with that I tend to agree. Several versions exist of it. I have shortened it. The description remarkably agrees with the paintings of Jesus from earlier times:

«« There lives at this time a man of singular virtue whose name is Jesus. He is a middle sized man, well-shaped, and of an amiable and reverend aspect; his hair of a color that can barely be matched, falling into graceful curls, waving about and very agreeable. His forehead high, large and imposing, his cheeks without spot or wrinkle, beautiful with a lovely red; his nose and mouth formed with exquisite symmetry. His beard is of a color suitable to his hair; his eyes bright and blue, clear and serene. Look innocent, dignified, manly, and mature; his arms and hands delectable to behold. »»

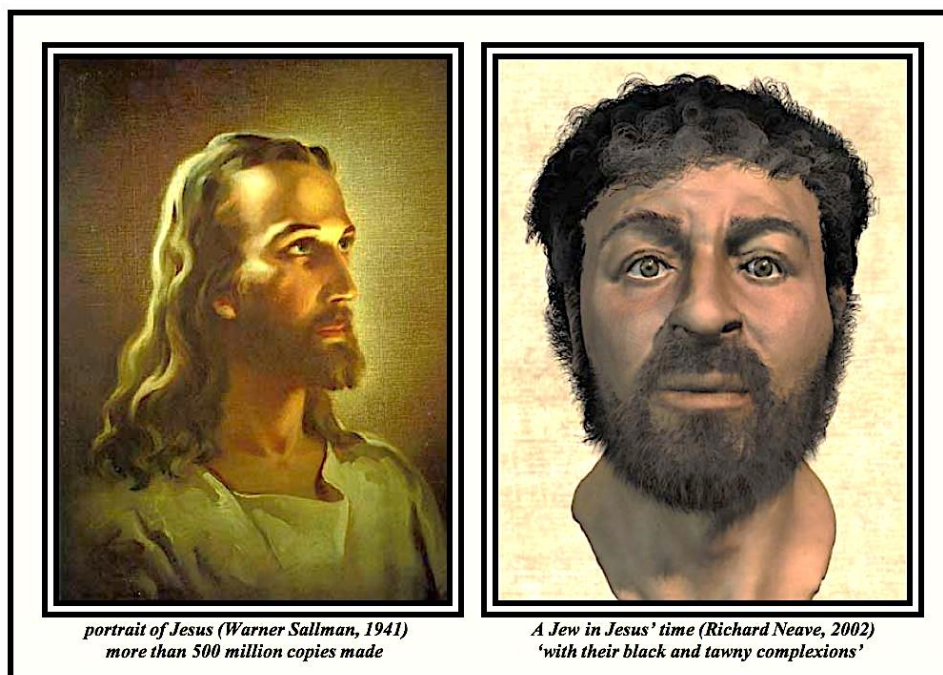
It follows that Jesus did not have the typical Jewish look. That He would have been like the average Arab or Jew is of course incorrect. (16) In course of time marriages with non-Jewish elements have diluted the old ethnic features; the deep-rooted cultural heritage is something else and equally important, if not more important. The people of Israel developed from Abraham's offspring mixed with foreign elements. Abraham had many servants from different backgrounds, who were later absorbed. Joseph married the daughter of the Prince of Sichem. Judah married Tamar, a Canaanite lady. Then there is the 'ereb rab', the mixed multitude, that left Egypt together with Israel. Moreover, Israel received many proselytes throughout history; for instance those mentioned in Esther 8:17. It is not difficult to know what David and his descendants looked like. For instance, it is twice said in the Bible that David was reddish with bright eyes. (1 Sam. 16:12; 17:42) For certain, the 'real face of Jesus' is no computer simulation. (17) We should rather look at the Shroud of Turin to discover his facial features. That the Virgin Mary was like the 'old-fashioned Jew' and did not look like the common man is understandable, because

the Davidic descendents were careful to keep the race pure in view of the Messiah who at one time had to be born from David's seed. (18) Today, that kind of thinking is unnecessary and unwanted. The Messiah has come already!

I conclude with some thoughts on the virgin birth. Based on the promise from Isaiah 7:14, the expectation in intertestamentary times was that the Messiah had to be born of a virgin (almah): *"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."* (19) Jonathan's Interview tells:

«« Whether this is true or not remains to be proven in future. There have been so many impostors in the world, so many babes born under pretended miracles, and all have proven to be a failure. This one may be false too, as this woman was only wishing to hide her shame or court the favor of the Jews. »»

In Gamaliel's Interview the question of the virgin birth is also considered. Mary answers that she had never shown to a man, nor was known by a man. The interviewer does not voice his opinion as to the truthfulness of the statement. At the end of the report he says something very important to Martha and Mary (of Magdalen): *"[You know], this was the same person that was born of the virgin in Bethlehem some 26 years ago."* He did not voice his own opinion here. He just wanted to elicit their reaction.



portrait of Jesus (Warner Sallman, 1941)  
more than 500 million copies made

A Jew in Jesus' time (Richard Neave, 2002)  
'with their black and tawny complexions'

The religious caste did not suspect or believe Jesus was born of a virgin, though in general the possibility was acknowledged. If they had believed so with Jesus, they would have acted differently. If Jesus failed to measure up to expectations and did not arrive to become the great deliverer of the nation, then logically He could not have been born of a virgin. Then his father was, to use the words of the interview, the vicious looking and very disagreeable Joseph ...whose children were very much like him. With such a man, things 'had' to go wrong! The Sanhedrin expected both a temporal and spiritual deliverer. Both expectations are correct, but not at one stroke. The world, two thousand years later, is still waiting for its temporal deliverance. The elite was looking for the temporal delivery first, to be followed by a spiritual delivery, which is just the reverse of what happened. In today's world, people still have difficulty understanding it.

## 7 – *None or all*

In trying to determine the possible falsehood of the ArchkoVolume, only an extreme position is warranted. Rev. Mahan was, either a man of modest means or a genius. To be able to write all those documents one needs to be a genius, but you have to concede that geniuses have better things to do. To write just one of those documents is easier. Even then, don't underestimate the task! The only sensible position is to accept that 'all' the documents are a crude forgery, or alternatively to accept that they are 'all' genuine – and that is the precise reason why they planted Eli's Story of the Magi in the library of Istanbul (after having it first translated in Hebrew), which in many ways is a replica of the respective chapter in Ben Hur. Because I know what hatred is of the Cross, I was able to unravel the plot. Remains the urgency to know whether Gamaliel's Interview was a forgery. It was the most difficult part. I believe to have sufficiently shown that Gamaliel's Interview carries the elements of both a fake and a forgery, perpetrated at a very early stage of the Christian movement. Having established that one document is genuinely ancient, by extension all the documents have to be ancient. By 'fake' I mean a sensible text in favour of a particular scholarly position, written by a pretended and venerated author with the object of giving the text greater authority. By 'forgery' I mean a plot to instill a falsehood and detract from the truth. We could say that, according to these definitions, a forgery is a fake that has been set up with evil design.

It is ironic that by means of a forgery we have reached the conclusion that in the ArchkoVolume, as from 1887, all the documents are genuine, that is to say, that they had their genesis in distant times. Whether written by the pretended authors remains to be seen. The question may never be solved as long as we cannot get hold of the original manuscripts and see how and where they were kept. This addresses the provenance. The manuscripts may be dated back by means of the Carbon-14 method in combination with a palaeographic analysis. The estimate of age, thus obtained, can in turn be checked with the alleged age of the documents. I am favourably inclined to accept that all were written by the pretended authors, except the Hillelite letters, and of course Gamaliel's Interview.

We have only the texts as provided by the ArchkoVolume. These need to be thoroughly studied, a task not done until now. Too bad we have not the originals in Latin and Hebrew. I agree with Rev. Mahan that nothing in them (except for Gamaliel's Interview) goes against the Christian faith. If we take the collection as a whole, the diversity of style between the different texts, the consistent subtlety of the train of thought, the intelligence that catches the eye and its fervour, these point to the veracity of the documents. I consider them a valuable addition to my religious insight. I don't agree that they don't add much to the common understanding of Christianity (the truths of faith are a different matter). This I have shown in my discussion of Gamaliel's Interview. I would like to add that without the ArchkoVolume, I would not have been able to write the sequel to the chronology of Christ's life, called: "The Messianic Expectation as Motivation for the Crucifixion of Christ" (in Part II). That is no small feat. I am proud to have been able to have written that. I hope you will appreciate the reading experience.

## 8 – *A discussion of the Documents*

In the following pages I discuss the documents of the ArchkoVolume, but will only highlight a few points, except from Pilate's Report. I leave it to others to study each one in depth. I skip a discussion of chapter 3 of the Archko Volume (the Constantine letters), as well as Mahan's discussion of the notes of Valleius Paterculus, because they do not add much to the work. Of interest, however, is the mention that Paterculus was 11 years old at the time Jesus was born. Wikipedia tells that he lived from ca 19 BC until ca 31 AD, which, from unexpected quarters, underlines that Jesus was born in 8 BC. Again – how did Mahan know? Answer: he did not. Once again, an element indicating the cor-

rectness of the presentation, disproving the accusation of plagiarism. In Part II, I quote liberally from the Archko Volume, especially from the last School of Hillel letter, called “The Expectation of the Jews”.

In section 9 (p. 39) I’ll discuss whether the mention of a Talmud in the pre-Christian age is correct. Caiaphas refers several times to the Talmuds. The prevailing view holds that until the writing down of the oral tradition, as from Rabbi Akiba (†135 AD), there existed only an oral tradition that had never been written down. During many hundreds of years, we are taught, the oral tradition was passed on from one generation to the next, uniquely by way of memorisation. Therefore, the question needs to be addressed if Talmuds in some form existed in the pre-Christian era.

#### **8a) Jonathan’s Interview with the Bethlehem shepherds - Report by Melker**

In total this comprises eight pages, of which Jonathan’s writing amounts to two. Those two are in fact an introduction to the Report of Melker, priest of the Synagogue at Bethlehem. The preamble goes as follows: *“Jonathan, son of Heziel, questions the shepherds and others at Bethlehem in regard to the strange circumstances reported to have occurred there, and reports to this court (the Sanhedrin).”* Jonathan tells that Melker, in the night that Christ was born, came out shouting and clapping his hands, and when the people crowded around him, he told them that 1400 years had elapsed after God appeared to Abraham (in reality those were 1900 years). This proves that already in Jesus’ time the Jews did not know how to calculate the Anno Mundi tables, which Ivan Panin by the Grace of God established at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD, which are discussed here in this book at the end.

Of interest is that Jonathan tells that:

«« In the past, in various instances, virgins have pretended to be with child by the Holy Ghost, but at the time of their delivery there was no light from the heavens, and no angels talking among the clouds and declaring that this was the King of the Jews. »

This proves that the sign of angels singing and the light from above were not just romantic imaginings, but served a purpose. It also proves that there was already some kind of knowledge of the Holy Ghost (Ruach Ha-Kadesh).

Jonathan ends his introduction by saying that Melker is a man of great learning and well versed in the prophecies. By reading Melker’s letter, we will discover that he is right in saying so. I would not have liked to miss the following (near the beginning):

«« It is most satisfactory to see and hear that the divine grandeur and authority of the sacred prophecies (...) rest on an inward light shining everywhere out of the bosom of a profound organic unity and an interconnected relation with a consistent and united teleology. This [unity of purpose] overleaps all times, the historical present as well as the past. All the past brought to light in these two events have just transpired [the events of the birth of the child of Elizabeth and that of the child of Mary of Bethlehem]. »»

This illustrates that already then a connection was made between the birth of our Redeemer and his precursor John the Baptist. Herod must have known and have tried to kill them both, which explains why John had to seek refuge in the desert, where he fed himself with wild honey and locusts. Tradition tells that his mother, old of age, died soon after he was born.

#### **8b) The Apology of Caiaphas sent to the Sanhedrin concerning the execution of Jesus**

The defence was written to free himself from any guilt as to the events leading to the Crucifixion of our beloved Lord. In it we discover a man versed in the wheelings and dealings of the time. Caiaphas' defence is typical for the pharisaic frame of mind so well described in the Gospels, which can be resumed as follows:

«« Could I stand and see all the holy ordinances, which had been appointed by our God for securing salvation to Israel, perverted by an impostor? (...) The cures he performed, appeared miraculous to his followers, but most ridiculous to the intelligent Jews and men of sober and reflective minds. (...) The people to whom he [Jesus] preached were an ignorant set, and knew but very little about doctrine of any kind. »»

This shows the arrogance and self-righteousness of the leading intelligentsia in Jesus' time who, being dressed in soft clothes, did not understand the truth. As Jesus said:

«« Why have you come out to the countryside? To see a reed shaken by the wind? And to see a person dressed in soft clothes, like your rulers and your powerful ones or members of the court? They are dressed in soft clothes, and they cannot understand truth. »» (cf. Mt. 11:7-10, Luke 7:24-27) (20)

Nowhere does Caiaphas quote the expectation in relation to the Book of Daniel, discussed in "The Messianic Expectation as Motivation for the Crucifixion of Christ", because that would have meant that he would also have to reflect on the suffering servant section of the Prophet Isaiah (ch. 53) and confess that he had sentenced the Saviour of Israel. So he turned the tables, saying:

«« It seems that he [Jesus] became so infatuated that he really thought he was the head of the Kingdom of Heaven. This manner of preaching, along with his presumption, aroused his enemies to a powerful pitch. I can say that I did everything within my power to keep the zealots from mobbing him in the Temple. »»

Caiaphas continues in the same vein:

«« The people were dividing into sects. These breaches were like a rent in a garment tearing wider apart continually. As it seemed to me, the whole of the Jewish theocracy was about to be blown away as a bubble on a breaker. (...) With a sort of selfish triumph Jesus says it shall be ruined. From his manner of saying it, I have no doubt he would be glad to see it quickly done. (...) If it had not been for the Roman soldiers, on the day of his execution we would have had one of the bloodiest insurrections ever known to the Jewish commonwealth. I am told that there was never seen such a concourse of people assembled at Jerusalem as at the cross. »»

This was in earnest, as is being explained by undersigned in §19 of "The Messianic Expectation as Motivation for the Crucifixion of Christ" :

«« Everything Jesus did and said in the last week before his Crucifixion can be regarded as outright provocation. (...) By his conduct Jesus inflamed his enemies as if He were pleading: 'Crucify Me'. That is why Jesus came on earth: to do the Will of the Father in order to bring salvation, and although we may charge the Jewish leaders with a 'de facto decide', yet it was not 'de jure', for if they had known who Christ was, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. »»

Much less in earnest was the following in Caiaphas' Apology:

«« Jesus' conduct was so strange and incompatible with the interest of the Jews as a nation, that it seemed to me that he was a subject employed by the Romans to keep the Jews submissive and obedient to all their tyranny and abuse. This



policy was most powerfully attacked by the officiating priest, and both by the Shammites and Zealots, and, in fact, the whole Jewish nation was becoming aroused to a war heat. The reprimands of Jesus were so severe against the rich and highly educated that they had turned against him, and brought all the power they had of their wealth and talent, so that I saw that a bloody insurrection was brewing fast. (...) And as the Jews became more and more divided and confused, the tyranny of the Romans increased. All they wanted was an excuse to slaughter the Jews and confiscate their property. »»

Clearly, the logic is wanting. If Jesus preached submissiveness, how could this have caused a bloody insurrection!? In truth, the rich and the highly educated turned against Him, but the Romans did not. The argument is broken-legged. Caiaphas was expecting a bloody insurrection because of the interpretation of the 70 weeks of Daniel, but that he could not tell, because then, in view of the darkness that covered the earth during the execution of the sentence and the terrible earthquake that followed, he would have made Jesus into a prophetic figure, and that was the last thing Caiaphas wanted. (See §18 of The Messianic Expectation as Motivation...) He therefore ends the report with the following outrageous remark, still professed by many a Jew: *"It seems that Pilate thirsted for his blood. Like all guilty tyrants, he was afraid of his own shadow, and wished to destroy everything that threatened his power."* Jesus threatened the Jewish establishment, not Pilate. The Jews threatened Pilate, and that is a fact. (Joh. 19:12)

The High Priest Caiaphas makes a big fuss out of Jesus' Oneness with God, as the Jews have done ever since. He even mentions it in his charges sent to Pilate. To prove his point he recites the Sh'ma from Deuteronomy 6:4 *"Hear O Israel ...our God is one!"* Says Caiaphas: *"Is it compatible with our religion, or is it consistent with philosophy, or admitted in his Holy Word, that there can be more gods than one?"* He contradicts himself, for at the same time he acknowledges that it was the "Bathkole" (Holy Ghost) who brooded over the waters (Gen. 1:2). This angle of attack is a dishonesty, as sufficiently illustrated in my article "Holy TRINITY in Old Testament".

Caiaphas' report shows several transcription errors: it should have been 'Eloah' instead of 'Elaah'; 'HaElion' instead of 'Hhelejon'; 'Ruach Ha-Kadesh' instead of 'Euroch of God'; and 'Eloah Shaddai' instead of 'Ele Laah Shddiai' – mistakes only to be explained if indeed the original was Hebrew, which is another element that speaks in favor of the ArchkoVolume.

### **8c) The Confession of Caiaphas concerning the Resurrection of Jesus**

This was on the same scroll as the preceding one of which Mahan says that he hardly knows whether to call it a resignation or a confession. I call it 'the confession'. In it we find a lengthy interrogation of the Apostles Peter and John, which is very much the story from the Gospels. At some point Caiaphas writes and in my view, correctly so:

«« Seeing the humble trust and confidence of these men and women – besides, as John says, thousands of others equally strong in their belief – it throws me into great agitation. (...) I feel some dreadful foreboding that is like a weight upon my heart. I cannot feel as a criminal from the fact that I was acting (...) in defence of God and my country, which I love better than my life, and if I was mistaken, I was honest in my mistake. »»

He ends with the following note:

«« So, noble Masters, I do not feel that I can officiate as priest anymore. If this strange personage is from God and should prove to be the Saviour we have been looking for for so long, and I have been the means of crucifying him, I have

no further offerings to make for sin. But I will wait and see how these things develop. If he proves to be the ruler we are looking for, this will soon develop into something more grand in the future. His glory will increase, his influence will spread wider and wider until the whole earth shall be full of his glory, and all the kingdoms of the world shall be his dominion. Such are the teachings of the prophets on this subject. Therefore, you will appoint Jonathan, or someone else, to fill the holy place. »»»

As concerns the appointment of Jonathan, Mahan remarks that history teaches us differently. The Talmud, however, lists Jonathan as the highpriest who officiated after Caiaphas. As Jesus was crucified in 26 AD, the reigning periods should be from 18 until 26 for Caiaphas, and from 26 until 37 AD for Jonathan. Remarkably, the reign of Caiaphas covers the whole period of the mission of John the Baptist and Jesus combined.

#### **8d) Pilate's Report to Cæsar on the arrest, trial, and Crucifixion of Jesus**

This is the report that started the whole affair. The Acta Pilati (Pilate's Report) referred to by Rev. Mahan should not be confounded with the apocryphal work called the Acts of Pilate, nor with the other generally known apocrypha about Pilate. After so many fraudulent documents have seen the light, it is refreshing to see the real one. As to be expected, it follows the narration of the Gospels quite closely, which is an important consideration for the times we are living in, for it supports the historicity of the events.

These Acta Pilati are an immensely important historical document. It happens to be mentioned by Justin Martyr († ca165) in his First Apology, as well as by the jurist and ecclesiastical writer Tertullian in his Apologeticus written in 197 AD, very shortly after he became a Christian. Justin says in his letter to the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius (emperor from 138 until 161) :

«« There are these words (Is. 35): *“At his coming the lame shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the stammerer shall be clear speaking. The blind shall see, and the lepers shall be cleansed. The dead shall rise and walk about.”* And that He did those things, you can learn from the Acts of Pontius Pilate. (Elsewhere he says:) Jesus Christ stretched forth his hands, being crucified, (...) and after He was crucified they cast lots upon his vesture, and they that crucified Him parted it among them. That these things did happen, you can ascertain from the Acts of Pontius Pilate. »»»

Tertullian, after speaking of our Saviour's Crucifixion and resurrection, thus proceeds: *“Of all these things relating to Christ, Pilate himself, in his conscience already a Christian, sent an account to Tiberius, then Emperor.”*

Pilate states near the beginning of his report:

«« My secretary's name is Manlius. He is the grandson of the chief of the conspirators who encamped in Etruria waiting for Catalina. Manlius had been for a long time an inhabitant of Judeah, and is well acquainted with the Hebrew language. »»»

This supports that Hebrew and not Aramaic was the current language amongst the Jews in Jerusalem and its surroundings, about which I have written in “The vernacular of the Jews in Jesus' time”.

Near the beginning of the Acta Pilati the following caught my attention: *“Cursed be the day that I succeeded Vallerius Flaceus in the government of Judeah, for since then my life has been one of continual uneasiness and distress.”* The conventional wisdom dictates that his predecessor was Valerius Gratus and not Valerius Flaceus (written Flaccus

in Pilate's Court), and indeed the story of Joseph Méry mentions Valerius Gratus. Perhaps the text in the original had faded away and allowed for a reading of Flaccus/Flaceus, instead of Gratus. Flacus was an ancient Roman noble family in the gentes Fulvia and Valeria, who in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century before Christ provided several high office-holders in the government of Rome. An Avillius Flaccus is mentioned by Philo as a contemporary of Pilate, being the governor of Egypt. And then there is a Valerius Flaccus, known to have written an epic, *Argonautica*, dedicated to the Emperor Vespasian, but he is not contemporary. We stick to Valerius Gratus as the rendering of Pilate's predecessor.

Remarkably, the report states on account of a private meeting between Pilate and Jesus:

«« You know that in my veins flows the Spanish mixed with Roman blood as incapable of fear as it is of weak emotion. When the Nazarene made his appearance, I was walking in my basilica. Suddenly, my feet seemed fastened with an iron hand to the marble pavement and I trembled in every limb as does a guilty culprit, though the Nazarene was as calm as innocence itself. »»

Until now Pilate's origin gave grounds for speculation, and now at least we know he had a Spanish background. Legend has it that Pontius Pilate was born in Tarragona when his father was governor of that city. The *Prætorium* there is known as the Palace of Pilate.

### ***The day Tiberius completed the conquest of Germania***

Tiberius completed Drusus' conquest of Germania after Drusus, his beloved brother, had died on the field of battle. The Suebans (Baden-Württemberg) appeared to accept the Roman protectorate without difficulty, but the proud Su-Cambrers waged battle and on a day in 8 BC 40,000 were pushed back to the other side of the upper Rhine. We can say that on that day Augustus Cæsar gave peace to the Roman world. This, according to the *Acta Pilati*, was the day Christ was born which, according to the visionary Anna-Katarina Emmerick, happened on November 24/25 of 8 BC. I like to call your attention to the 'peace to the male child' ceremony, described Appendix-3. Unfortunately, I could nowhere find the day that the Su-Cambrers were defeated.

The Su-Cambrers or Su-Cimbri were ethnically related to the Teutons. One of them, a boy named Hermann (latin form Armin), was taken to Rome and educated in the ways of the Empire. Sixteen years later he was the guide of general Varus whom he brought with his three legions (18,000 men) into a swampy region of the Teutoburg Forest (somewhere in Westphalia) where they fell into an ambush: only a handful escaped. It is written that Hermann belonged to the Cherusky tribe, but no tribe is known by that name and so this is probably his ancestral or royal name.

Another interesting remark is found in Jesus' farewell address: "*Prince of the earth, I come not to bring war into the world, but peace, love, and charity. I was born the same day on which Augustus Cæsar gave peace to the Roman world.*" This must be, in the year 8 BC, the day that Tiberius completed the conquest of Germania. Of course, there were irregularities now and then, a famous one leading to the tragic defeat of Varus in 9 AD, but on the whole it can be said that on that day peace was given to the world. Others have placed the era of peace at the beginning of the reign of Augustus in 27 BC, and even earlier in 31 BC, which marks the victory of the battle of Actium.

I like to finish with Pilate's description of the sentencing and execution of Christ:

«« I urged all these pleas, hoping they might awe them into subjection, but they still cried: "Crucify him! Crucify him!" I then ordered Jesus to be scourged, hoping this might satisfy them, but it only increased their fury. I then called for



a basin, and washed my hands in the presence of the clamorous multitude, thus testifying that in my judgement Jesus of Nazareth had done nothing deserving of death, but my action was in vain. It was his life these wretches thirsted for! »»

None of the Gospels suggest that Pilate had any desire to execute Jesus. But because the legal authority to pass the death sentence belonged to the Romans and not to the Sanhedrin any more, the chief priests and elders of the Jews delivered Jesus to Pilate. Also, this would legalistically exonerate them from guilt of Jesus' death. John 19:11-16 reads:

«« ...Jesus answered Pilate: *"You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has greater sin."* From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying: *"If you let this man go, you are not Cæsar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Cæsar."* When Pilate therefore heard that saying he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgement seat in a place that is called Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews: *"Behold your King!"* But they cried out: *"Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!"* Pilate said to them: *"Shall I crucify your King?"* The chief priests answered: *"We have no King but Cæsar!"* Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. »»

A complaint to the Emperor that Pilate refused to convict Jesus, who said He was King – with a kingdom not of this world but from above, the very place that was the source of Pilate's own authority – could have caused Pilate to lose his position as 'Amicus Cæsaris' (Cæsar's friend) and with it his procuratorship; then even his life could be at stake. It is clear why this threat, shouted in the Judgement Hall, proved very effective. Pilate continues his report as follows:

«« Often in our civil commotions have I witnessed the furious anger of the multitude, but nothing can be compared to what I witnessed on this occasion. It might have been truly said that all the phantoms of the infernal regions had assembled at Jerusalem. The crowd appeared not to walk, but to be borne off and whirled as a vortex, rolling along in living waves from the portals of the prætorium, even unto Mount Zion, with howling screams, shrieks, and vociferations such as were never heard in the seditions of the Pannonia, or in the tumults of the Forum Romanum. By degrees the day darkened like a winter's twilight, such as had been at the death of the great Julius Cæsar. It was likewise the Ides of March. I, the continued governor of a rebellious province, was leaning against a column of my Basilica, contemplating athwart the dreary gloom of these fiends of Tartarus while they were dragging to execution the innocent Nazarene. All around me was deserted, Jerusalem had vomited forth her indwellers through the funeral gate that leads to Gemoniæ. [These are the stairs leading into the river Tiber in Rome, where corpses of criminals were being displayed before they were dragged down.] An air of desolation and sadness enveloped me. My guards had joined the cavalry, and the Centurion, with a display of power, was endeavoring to keep order. I was left alone, and my breaking heart admonished me that what was passing at that moment appertained rather to the history of the gods than that of men. A loud clamor was heard proceeding from Golgotha, which, borne on the winds, seemed to announce an agony such as was never heard by mortal ears. Dark clouds lowered over the pinnacle of the Temple and setting over the city, covered it as with a veil. So dreadful were the signs that men saw both in the heavens and on the earth that Dionysius the Areopagite is reported to have exclaimed: *"Either the author of nature is suffering or the universe is falling apart."* Whilst these appalling scenes of nature were transpiring there was a dreadful earthquake in lower Egypt, which filled everybody with fear, and scared the superstitious Jews almost to death. It is said Balthasar, an aged and learned

Jew of Antioch, was found dead after the excitement was over. Whether he died from alarm or grief is not known. He was a strong friend of the Nazarene.

Near the first hour of the night I threw my mantle around me, and went down into the city toward the gates of Golgotha. The sacrifice was consummated. The crowd was returning home, still agitated, it is true, but gloomy, taciturn, and desperate. What they had witnessed had stricken them with terror and remorse. I also saw my little Roman cohort pass by mournfully, the standard-bearer having veiled his eagle in token of grief, and I overheard some of the Jewish soldiers murmuring strange words which I did not understand. Others were recounting miracles very like those which have so often smitten the Romans by the will of the gods. Sometimes groups of men and women would halt, then, looking back toward Mount Calvary, would remain motionless in expectation of witnessing some new prodigy.

I returned to the prætorium, sad and pensive. On ascending the stairs, the steps of which were still stained with the blood of the Nazarene, I perceived an old man in a suppliant posture, and behind him several Romans in tears. He threw himself at my feet and wept most bitterly. It is painful to see an old man weep, and my heart being already overcharged with grief, we, though strangers, wept together. And in truth it seemed that the tears lay very shallow that day with many whom I perceived in the vast concourse of people. I never witnessed such an extreme revulsion of feeling. Those who betrayed and sold him, those who testified against him, those who cried: "*Crucify him, we have his blood*", all slunk on like cowardly curse, and washed their teeth with vinegar. As I am told that Jesus taught a resurrection and a separation after death – if such should be the fact – I am sure it commenced in this vast crowd. "*Father*" – said I to him, after gaining control of my feelings – "*who are you, and what is your request?*" "*I am Joseph of Arimathea*", replied he, "*and am come to beg of you upon my knees the permission to bury Jesus of Nazareth.*" "*Your prayer is granted*", said I to him. And at the same time I ordered Manlius to take some soldiers with him to superintend the interment, lest it should be profaned.

A few days later the sepulchre was found empty. His disciples proclaimed all over the country that Jesus had risen from the dead, as he had foretold. This created more excitement even than the Crucifixion! As to its truth I cannot say for certain, but I have made some investigation into the matter. So you can examine for yourself and see if I am at fault, as Herod tries to present things. Joseph [of Arimathea] buried Jesus in his own tomb. Whether he contemplated his resurrection or calculated to cut him another [tomb], I cannot tell. The day after he was buried one of the priests came to the prætorium and said they were apprehensive that his disciples intended to steal the body of Jesus and hide it, and then make it appear that he had risen from the dead, as he had foretold, of which [that he had said so] they were perfectly aware. I sent him to the captain of the royal guard (Malcus) to tell him to take Jewish soldiers, place as many around the sepulchre as required and then, if anything should happen, they could only blame themselves, and not the Romans.

When the great excitement arose about the sepulchre being found empty, I felt a deeper solicitude than ever. I sent for Malcus, who told me he had placed his lieutenant, Ben Isham, with one hundred soldiers, around the sepulchre. He told me that Isham and the soldiers were very much alarmed at what had occurred there that morning. I sent for this man Isham, who related to me, as near as I can recollect, the following circumstances: He said that at about the beginning of the fourth watch, they saw a soft and beautiful light over the sepulchre. He at first thought that the women had come to embalm the body of Jesus, as was their custom, but he could not see how they had gotten through the guards. While these thoughts were passing through his mind, behold, the whole place was lighted up,

and there seemed to be crowds of the dead in their graveclothes. All seemed to be shouting and filled with ecstasy, while all around and above was the most beautiful music he had ever heard. The whole air seemed to be full of voices praising God. At this time there seemed to be a reeling and swimming of the earth, so that he turned so sick and faint that he could not stand on his feet. He said, the earth seemed to swim from under him. His senses left him, so that he knew not what did occur. I asked him in what condition he was when he came to himself. He said he was lying on the ground with his face down. I asked him if he could not have been mistaken as to the light. Was it not day that was coming in the East? He said at first he thought of that, but at a stone's cast it was exceedingly dark, and then he remembered it was too early for day. I asked him if his dizziness might not have come from being wakened up and getting up too suddenly, as it sometimes has that effect. He said he was not, that he had not been asleep all night, as the penalty is death for him to sleep on duty. He said he had let some of the soldiers sleep for a (short) time. Some were asleep then. I asked him how long the scene lasted. He said he did not know, but he thought nearly an hour. He said it was hid by the light of day. I asked him if he went to the sepulchre after he had come to himself. He said no, because he was afraid. Just as soon as relief came they all went to their quarters. I asked him if he had been questioned by the priests. He said he had been. They wanted him to say it was an earthquake and that they were asleep. They offered him money to say that the disciples came and stole Jesus, but he saw no disciples. He did not know that the body was gone until he was told. I asked him about the private opinion of those priests he had conversed with. He said that some of them thought that Jesus was no man, that he was not a human being, that he was not the son of Mary, that he was not the same that was said to be born of the virgin in Bethlehem, that the same person had been on earth previously together with Abraham and Lot, and such at many times and places.

It seems to me that, if the Jewish theory be true, these conclusions are correct, for they are in accord with this man's life, as is known and testified by both friends and foes, for the elements meant no more in his hands than the clay in the hands of the potter. He could convert water into wine. He could change death into life, disease into health. He could calm the seas, still the storms, call up fish with a silver coin in its mouth. Now, I say, if he could do all these things, which he did, and many more, as the Jews all testify – in doing these things he created enmity against himself, for he was not charged with criminal offenses nor violating any law, nor of wronging any individual in person, and all these facts are known to thousands, as well by friends and foes – then I am almost ready to say, as did Manlius at the cross: *"Truly this was the Son of God."*

Now, noble Sovereign, this is as near the facts in the case as I can arrive at. I have taken pains to make the statement very full, so that you may judge of my conduct upon the whole, as I hear that Antipater has said many hard things of me in this matter.

*With the promise of faithfulness and good wishes to my noble Sovereign.  
I am your most obedient servant, PONTIUS PILATE »»*

#### **8e) Herod's defence before the Roman Senate in regard to his conduct at Bethlehem**

After the Acta Pilati we find in the ArchkoVolume the letter to the Roman Senate of Herod the Great (undersigned Herod Antipater) in defence of the massacre of the Innocents. I must say that it contains fascinating reading, but nothing quotable here except his reference to Jonathan's interview with the Bethlehem shepherds, reported to the Sanhedrin, which however was not found in the Vatican but in Istanbul and this therefore constitutes an element for the authenticity of both documents. Here is the quote: from

Herod: “And as to the noise heard by Melker and those shepherd boys, it was only the echo of the shepherds on the other side of the mountain calling the nightwatch, or scaring away the wolves from their flocks.”

Jonathan writes in the record of his interview:

«« All at once the air seemed to be filled with human voices, saying: “*Glory! Glory! Glory to the most high God!*” (...) Their shoutings would rise up in the heavens, and then would sink down in mellow strains, and roll along at the foot of the mountains, and die away in the most soft and musical manner they had ever heard. Then it would begin again high up in the heavens, in the very vaults of the sky, and descend in sweet and melodious strains, so that they could not refrain from shouting and weeping at the same time. (...) Some said the gods were coming down to destroy them. Others said a star had fallen, until Melker the Priest came out shouting and clapping his hands, seeming to be frantic with joy. »»

### ***I, Pilate, the continued governor of a rebellious province***

If, as is still the current view, the administration of Pilate started in the year 26 and Jesus was crucified during the third Passover of his public mission, then Jesus was crucified in 29. The three Passovers are mentioned in John 2:13, 6:4 and 12:1. Some people think that ‘a feast’ of John 5:1 should also be taken into consideration, but ‘a feast’ is not Passover, for Exodus 23:14-19 recommends three high festivals as part of the seven feasts of the Lord, in particular Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. In the Jewish mode of thinking at the time, in which John was brought up, Passover would always be pointed to as a high festival, and so ‘a feast’ cannot be Passover. Maria Valtorta surmises that the feast of 5:1 is Pentecost, but Anna Katarina Emmerick tells us that she knows that it is Ennorum, a feast unheard-of nowadays that by her description denotes the closing and the beginning of the Jewish liturgical year, which is presently situated at a feast called Simkhat Torah, that came into being during the Middle Ages. Those who place Jesus’ Crucifixion in the year 30, have to accept 4 Passovers during his public mission, but this, accordingly, is inaccurate. The Apology of Caiaphas says: “Although Jesus has not been preaching over three years, he has more followers today than Abraham”, and that means that 4 Passovers are out of the question.

Then there is the question of Pilate being the ‘continued governor’, which is how he calls himself. If Pilate was appointed in the year 26 and Jesus crucified in 29, and what I am going to tell also holds for the year 30, he would never have written: “*I, the continued governor of a rebellious province*”, because with his freshly won reappointment this would have been uncalled for. He found himself in an embarrassing position and this would have damaged his plea with the Emperor. If, according to our chronology, he had entered the 10<sup>th</sup> year of his rule, it would have been an unoffending remark that was bent to give more weight to his argument. This is another indication that corroborates both my chronology and the authenticity of the account ascribed to Pilate.

### **8f) Herod’s defence before the Senate in regard to the execution of John the Baptist**

The letter of defence by Herod (who ruled from before 20 BC until after 39 AD) was written after his defeat against Aretas, not long before the end of Herod’s reign. He starts his letter with the following words:

«« My Noble Lords, Greetings: it is true, as my opponent asserts, that I was defeated in battle with Aretas, King of Arabia. (...) I know that the superstitious Jews say my defeat was for my wickedness in beheading John the Baptist. »»

According to Josephus, Herod's defeat was popularly believed to be a divine punishment for his execution of John the Baptist. The Columbia Encyclopedia (6<sup>th</sup> Ed. 2008), mentions under ARETAS:

«« Aretas, dynastic name of the Nabataean kings of Petra. The best-known Aretas was Aretas IV (9 BC - 40 AD), ruler of South Palestine, most of Jordan, Northern Arabia, and Damascus. His daughter married to Herod Antipas, who put her away in favor of Herodias, his niece. In 36 AD Aretas attacked Antipas and defeated him, but Rome took Antipas' part. Tiberius' death in 37 AD saved Aretas from the Roman army. »»

There is not much more to say. Herod Antipas' defence before the Roman Senate is of interest, but no more, although it retains some value as a document giving proof of the historicity of the Gospel accounts as concerns John the Baptist, the preaching and miracles of Christ and the massacre of the innocents, particularly so because those stories were dealt with without any intention of providing such a proof.

### **8g) The School of Hillel letters regarding God's providence to the Jews**

The School of Hillel letters are very instructive. Their content covers about half of the total volume of documents. It would be too much to give a summary of all the letters. Let me say this. They belong in my view to the better part of the ancient world literature.

- The **first letter** of only five pages, consists of two parts (A & B). In Part A is written:

«« Why is it that Josephus sold Galilee to the Romans? Why is it that the sanctifying of the Spirit is withdrawn? Why is it that the Urim and the Thummim in the Temple have not changed the color of their stones for thirty years? Why is it that the light at the threshold of the Temple has ceased to burn? And why is it that the Jews have lost the feeling of brotherhood and fight each other like the beasts of Hell, to such an extent that God has given us over and permitted the Romans to devour our heritage, to burn our city, to destroy our beloved Temple and drench it with the blood of its devotees? »»

From the foregoing it is clear that Part A was written after the First Jewish-Roman War that ended with the destruction of the great Temple in the year 70 AD. In view of the emphasis placed on those events we can confidently state that this was written shortly thereafter, let us assume around 75 AD. It is also clear, given the age of the author – he witnessed the Apostle Peter preach and perform a miracle as described in the third chapter of the Book of Acts – that at 75 AD he was not younger than about 65 years. This is another good reason to believe that it was written at approximately that time, assuming both parts come from the same author, which might well be so. There is a different style of writing, which has to do with the different topics and the time span in between. Part B ends by promising an examination of the principles as had been set out in Peter's sermon, which leads to the conclusion that that part was written just after the author had witnessed the Apostle Peter, thus in the year 26.

- In the **second letter** of 6 pages, there is mention of "*the land of Canaan, afterwards called Judeah and still later Palestine*". I would like to point out that the name Palestine was given by the Romans to what was formerly called Judeah, after they had completed the Second War, which was in the year 135 AD. The writer of this letter also speaks of "*a period of nearly 500 years to the present as from Ezra, Nehemiah and Haggai*". And also: "*Although our holy city is no more, and although we are dispersed and many of us*

*have been sold into slavery, yet the Holy Temple of our Lord lives and will continue to live in our hearts forever.*" This leads to the conclusion that the letter was written by someone who had remained Jewish, probably around the year 140 AD. In it there is no mention of Christians or any related events.

In this letter there is an interesting but faulty argument about the invention of writing. It is faulty because one does not need alphabetic writing to make a record of a commercial transaction.

«« It is not probable that any such thing as alphabetic writing existed, for we read that Abraham took no other evidence of the purchase which he made of a burying place for his family than living witnesses of the bargain. (...) an invention that took place some time within the 500 years that elapsed between Abraham and Moses. »»

- In the **third letter** of 8 pages, is written: "*Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar 557 years ago, and the remnant of the people was carried to Babylon and the neighboring countries, where the main body had been removed to 18 years earlier.*" Jerusalem was destroyed at the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity in the year 559 BC (the adjusted Panin chronology). This would place the letter at the year 2 BC. Yet, elsewhere the letter states: "*Philip fell by the hand of an assassin, leaving his kingdom to his son Alexander, a youth of twenty. This happened 380 years ago.*" Because recent dates are more reliable, we take this one as a starting point. Indeed Philip died in the year 336 BC when Alexander was twenty. Therefore, the letter was written in the year 45 AD (the zero is skipped in our Gregorian calendar).

- In the **fourth letter** of 4 pages, very nicely written, there is question of: "*...and 50 years ago all the world was given peace.*" This could have been on the occasion of the battle of Actium in 31 BC, or on the occasion of the beginning of the reign of Emperor Augustus, which happened in 27 BC. The same author says that "*about 70 years ago Julius Caesar subjected the liberties of his realm*". This occurred in 44 BC, the year of death also of Julius Caesar. Therefore the year 27 BC is meant by "*peace was given to the world*". This places the writing of the letter in 24 AD, when Jesus just started his mission.

- The **fifth letter** of 4 pages is a small philosophical treatise in the Hellenistic tradition that could have been written by Philo of Alexandria. There is no way to date it. It is a marvel; an attempt to harmonise Scripture with Greek culture and starts with the consideration:

«« Man is essentially a human being. He is made so by the faculties of his mind, as well as the emotions of his heart. He is so both by the intellectual and moral nature. One of the first and most spontaneous exercises of the reason of man is the investigation of cause and effect, and one of the first convictions which are developed in the mind is that there cannot be an effect without a cause. The next is, that the nature of a cause must correspond with the nature of the effect, and can certainly be known by it. »»

This seems a splendid way to illuminate God's involvement in the course of history, which, by the way, is also the particular object of my own studies.

- The **sixth letter** of just 3 pages starts very nicely: "*The end of all religion as a positive institution is to enlighten the understanding and cultivate the devotions. The mind must think and the heart must worship. So it must be through life.*"

Near the end it states: "*The city, the Temple, the doctrine, the priests, the law, and the nation are all gone.*" It was therefore written after the Bar Kochba Revolt, being fought

during 132-136 AD, when these things happened. And it was probably written before the writing of the Mishna some hundred years later, as the Mishna was the first major written redaction of the Jewish doctrine, which started to put an end to the disarray caused by the loss of the Temple.

- The **seventh letter**, entitled “The Expectation of the Jews”, is actually not a letter, but a kind of sermon, and a rather long one of 19 pages. The author mentions Suetonius and Tacitus, which places the letter no earlier than the second century. I would say, in the middle of the second century, or a little later. This agrees with the remark at the end of the essay, which mentions the four evangelists. The development of the New Testament canon was, like that of the Old Testament, a gradual process. The writings attributed to the apostles circulated amongst the earliest Christian communities. The Pauline epistles were circulating in collected form by the end of the first century. Justin Martyr refers in the early second century to the ‘memoirs’ of the apostles; he tells his non-Christian readers that they are called the ‘Gospels’. They were regarded then already as being on a par with the Old Testament. A four-Gospel canon (the Tetramorph) was in place by the time of Irenæus, circa 160 AD, who refers to it directly. While there was a good measure of debate in the Early Church over the New Testament canon, the major writings were accepted by almost all Christians by the middle of the second century.

## 9 – *The Talmuds*

Reverend Mahan tells that he found Talmud writings from the pre-Christian age. He devotes a chapter to it, called “A short sketch of the Talmuds”. It would have been better to have it called: “A short sketch of the Mishnah and Tosephta (supplements) of pre-Talmudic times, deposited at Byzantium”. Take note that in Gamaliel’s Interview the author refers to: “*in the talmuds of the Jews*”. This leads to confusion because of the great Talmud elaborated as from the second century AD. Here and at two other places the term is changed in ‘recorded teachings’. The findings imply that, contrary to current thought, a written tradition existed already in the intertestamentary times, or, as the Jews like to call it, the Second Temple Period. This has repercussions for the way we are used to see the development of Jewish thought as from the point that they returned from the Babylonian Captivity, which occurred in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The Talmud, as it is known today, was probably given a head-start with a mishnah written by Rabbi Akiba (ca 50-135 AD) and his disciples, who took notes of the ongoing discussions. At a later stage it was re-edited and enlarged by Rabbi Judah the Nasi († ca 217) who, towards the close of the second century started to collect the teachings of former ages, better known as the oral tradition. He was the compiler of the Mishnah, not its spiritual father, although he will have influenced the outcome by means of the process of selection and compilation, and of course he will have added some of his own clarifications. Without further specification, the Mishnah or Mishnah-proper refers to the work of Judah the Nasi and his disciples. This has been amplified by later generations in a huge collection of writings called Talmud (or Gemara), a concept that includes the Mishnah. The mishnaic writings of the pre-Talmudic times are part of the ‘lamod’, which means teaching by example, as one practices with a child, who in this way learns from his father. It is a word derived from ‘to goad’, which by implication means to teach. Lamod is a word cognate with thalmud, the last word meaning study or doctrine.

‘Mishnah’ is commonly translated as ‘quotation’ and concerns the oral tradition of the Halakha, Aggadah and Midrash. The Halakha is about purely legal matters, meditated on from the religious point of view; the Aggadah, on the other hand, concerns ethical and folkloristic speculations; the Midrash is about the sermonic implications of both the Halakha and Aggadah. The question of whether the Mishnah, recorded by Rabbi Judah, was the first time that the Jewish body of teaching was committed to writing is a con-



Itroversial issue. Rashi (1040-1105) and other commentators have maintained that this was indeed the case; that the oral tradition was not put into writing until the period after the age of the Amoraim (explainers), who are situated just prior to Rabbi Judah, who applied himself to recording the Amoraim debates, who in their debates refer to earlier sages, named the Tannaim (teachers). The so-called French recension of the Letter of Sherira (21) was made to support the theory that the writing down of Halakha had always been forbidden, which means that in the age that made the Talmud, there was no Talmud. This view was widely accepted and tenaciously held by the Jewish community, while it is now accepted by many that the preparatory writing was probably done by Rabbi Akiba (ca 50 – ca 135 AD). But that view is also far too restricted.

The term Lamod in my definition, that includes the writing down of the oral tradition during the intertestamentary time, is a laughing matter for the learned men. Yet, the generally accepted view is hardly defensible, for it is unlikely that a culture, where the words of prophecy were meticulously put down in writing and carefully transmitted, would keep orally and only orally the words of the sages for their future application. I have difficulty understanding how easily the scientific establishment came to believe the fairy tale that a huge body of text was committed to memory only, and was thus passed on from one generation to the next. It is ridiculous to believe. As Prime Minister Gladstone answered a man who addressed him with “*Mr. Johnson, I believe*” : “*If you believe that, you can believe anything!*” Exaggeration is the pitfall of any position. Nonetheless, memorisation must have played a great part in the Bet Ha-midrashes (the schools). Actually, the way Hebrew was written, without vowels, promoted this kind of practice and it may have been more customary in the pre-exilic times.

I now quote from chapter 8 of George Foot Moore’s: “Judaism - In the first centuries of the Christian era: the Age of Tannaim”, first published in 1927. Moore was much encouraged by the publication of this monumental study by the Talmud scholar Louis Ginzberg, a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York:

«« The critic who, disregarding this controversy, takes the internal evidence of the literature itself will find in it as much proof as can be had in such matter, that in the compilation of these works written sources were used not only by the final redactors, but in all probability by those predecessors who, in the middle of the second century, revived the schools of the Law after the rescinding of Hadrian’s Edict. (22) The use of written sources is peculiarly clear in the composition of the Midrash books, but there are whole treatises in the Mishnah which are probably a century or more older in writing than the publication of the Mishnah by the Patriarch Judah. No doubt in the earlier period, as in Talmudic times (when the Talmud was still in the process of elaboration), the theory was that tradition was strictly oral. No manuscript was allowed in the school; the teacher quoted from memory, and the students were required to memorize the Halakhot. Such manuscripts as existed were, therefore, in the private possession of teachers for use as an aid to memory in preparation or reference. The history of Muslim tradition (and the Jewish geonic academies) is an instructive parallel to this practice. They may frequently have been memoranda on particular topics, which is also suggested by Maimonides in the introduction to his Mishneh Torah. »»

I also quote from Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (1934-83), the world-renowned Torah scholar, from the introduction of his “Sefer Yetzirah” (revised edition 1997):

«« At that time (latter part of the first century AD) there was a rule that the oral tradition be reviewed exactly, word for word, precisely as they had been given over. The rule was: “one should always review the precise wording of his master.” Each master would therefore provide a program of study, which his disciples would memorize word for word. In the legalistic field this was known as the



“First Mishnah.” It is possible that Rabbi Akiba also produced an oral text of Sefer Yetzirah for his students of mystical lore to memorize. Besides this, personal notes may also have been kept.

In this respect, the Sefer Yetzirah (consisting of about 1,800 words) would have been no different from the rest of the oral tradition. Although it was meant to be transmitted by word of mouth, and was not actually published, personal records and manuscripts were kept. This was especially true of important teachings that were not usually reviewed in the academies, as well as esoteric texts. Similarly, the heads of the academies would keep written notes in order to accurately preserve the traditions.

Although these notes were never published, they were carefully preserved in the academies. Subsequent teachers often added marginal notes to these manuscripts, and such notes were even occasionally found in the Biblical scrolls which they used. Since these notes were preserved by private individuals and never distributed publicly, they were collectively known as ‘hidden scrolls’ (Megillat Setarim). Not only such esoteric material as Sefer Yetzirah was included in this category, but even such legalistic material as the Mishna, which was meant to be transmitted orally. »»

Finally I quote from the “New Edition of the Babylonian Talmud, Original Text Edited, Corrected, Formulated, and Translated into English” (1896-1918), by Michael L. Rodkinson, from its Brief General Introduction:

«« Most of the Mishnayoth date from a very early period, and originated with the students of the Jewish academies which existed since the days of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah [2 Chron. 17-9]. The rabbinical students of ancient times noted the essence of the academical teachings in brief form, and, as a rule, in the idiom in which it was spoken to them, so that they could afterward easily commit it to memory. They have sometimes, however, added comments and extensive explanations in the form of notes, so that the mass of their learning, embraced in course of time, according to some authorities, as many as six hundred divisions. (...) In course of time, however, when those Mishnayoth were noted down from earlier existing copies, many additions were made. Finally Rabbi Jehudah the Prince, generally called Rabbi, concluded to collect all the Mishnayoth in his college for proper arrangement. (...) Of the Mishnayoth so treated by Rabbi some were left entirely intact, and were reproduced in their original form. To others he parenthetically added brief comments of his own, and there are still others that he changed in form completely, because already in his day old customs had changed and taken new forms. Such of them as he desired to make final and indisputable national laws he incorporated into the Mishna without mentioning the names of their authors. Where, however, he could formulate no definite decision himself, or where they were well known to the public, he gave full information of their authors as well as the names of those opposed to their conclusions, without any decision on his part. In still others he mentioned no names, but contented himself with saying: A’herim, i.e. “Anonymous teachers say”, not wishing to specify their authority for certain reasons. Rabbi did not seek the compliance and agreement of all his contemporaries in his arrangement of the Mishna, and many differed from his conclusions and even arranged Mishnayoth in accordance with their own views. Being, however, a man of great prominence, influence, and wealth, Rabbi succeeded in quelling opposition and in making his conclusions as acceptable as the Mosaic law itself; and his great pupils, seeing that his intentions were only to prevent dissensions and his only aim the public weal, supported him nobly, until his teachings were accepted as the law of the nation. Many Mishnayoth were rejected and destroyed by Rabbi, but, not being in possession of all those he wished to destroy, he went in search of them to colleges outside of his jurisdiction.

There, however, he met with great opposition. Some of the Mishnayoth were hidden beyond his reach, others were secretly preserved and arranged within the very limits of his domain and promptly brought to light after his death. But Rabbi's pupils did not dignify them with the name Mishna, implying 'next to Mosaic law', but called them Tosephtoth, meaning 'additions of a later period', or merely additional, not principal, matter. Some of them were also named Boraithoth (outsiders), i.e. secondary, not academical matter. They spread, however, very rapidly after Rabbi's death, and to such an extent as to threaten the Mishnayoth of Rabbi with entire extinction. Such would actually have been the result, had not the pupils of Rabbi organised again colleges whose aim was to perpetuate the Mishnayoth of Rabbi, which they also accomplished. »»

One may wonder how it is possible that so many managed to memorize such a huge body of text – Rodkinson mentions 600 divisions. I think it is because memory not only resides in the self, but also in the collective. Actually, nothing gets lost from what has ever happened because being memorized in the matrix of the universe. Therefore, it is very common that children of four or five years old are able to faultlessly memorize the whole Koran without understanding a word. Nowadays piano players are able to memorize an enormous body of music. Why? Because so many before them have put to memory the same music so that it has become engrained in the collective memory. The same process must have played a role in memorizing the Jewish oral tradition.

Now back to the Archko Volume. In less than two thousand words, far too few, the Archko Volume describes the nature of the Mishnah-lamod as kept in the Hagia Sophia Library at the time – which does not need to have been on the premises of the Mosque itself. Where they moved to afterwards remains an open question. (1) Mahan explains that the Mishnah-lamod is a collection in the form of scrolls. Obviously, the Mishnah-proper contains much borrowed material from these writings. The greater part of the Halakhic tradition of the Mishnah-lamod seems to have been written by some pupil of Hillel (23), thus before the outbreak of the Great War (66-70 AD). (24) There is a section, so tells Mahan, so instructed no doubt by his translator: "*Called the Tosephta. The work at hand concentrates on the ritual of the Temple Service.*" He calls it "*a voluminous work that in reality is a regulator of human life.*" Then, tells Mahan, "*comes the Mechilta, which tells about the organisation of the Sanhedrin.*" Apparently this also covers the Roman period of Jesus public life. He continues:

«« Then there is the Saphra, in Hebrew 'corner-stone' or 'foundation rock', which goes to show that all these laws were founded upon God's word or authority. This is quite an extended work that is full of quotations from the various works of the ancient world. (...) One more book I must call attention to, that is, the Siphri (or numbers). This is more of a chronological and biographical account than anything else. It gives the history of great events, and mentions the names of its actors, enumerating the birth, lineage, deaths, as well as all the wise sayings of such men as Abraham, Joshua, Moses, David, Solomon, and many others. (...) Besides these there are the Pesikta (notes) and Midrashim, which are full of interesting items, sermons and extracts of sermons, and wise sayings of great men of all ages, the decisions of the great Sanhedrin on points of law and doctrine. »»

In the Hagia Sophia library a statement was found to the effect that the collection, or the greater part of it, was assembled at the outbreak of the Great War. We should expect that a better reading of the scrolls provides more answers as to their origin. Perhaps it will show that nonetheless part of the Temple Library was saved from the fire that was lit by the rebels, but it could also be that these scrolls came from private libraries and the Bet Hamidrash (schools) in various parts of the country, and were hidden in a place like Qumran and recovered because the people involved in hiding them had survived the war.

Possibly, they came from Pella, for that part was in the possession of Jewish Christians such as Joseph of Arimathea.

We know that Joseph of Arimathea was a wealthy man and at one time a member of the Sanhedrin, but he was nonetheless a follower of Jesus. He is mentioned in the Gospels. In view of his wealth, we may assume that he disposed of a large private library like the one found by Sidrus, the Roman officer in service of Titus, when the Holy City was plundered. This story is found in the introduction to the “Ancient Book of Jasher”, to be discussed hereafter.

A possible route, therefore, is that successively the documents, made by copyists, came into Arimathea’s private library at a time close to the writing of the original autographs, as might have happened with Melker’s Report on the circumstances of Jesus’ birth. The tradition tells that Joseph of Arimathea became a missionary to France and England. In this position he could not have kept his library, but before he left the country he will have left his business and other interests to the care of someone who, of course, was a Christian. After God had warned the Christians to escape the impending war, which started exactly forty years after Jesus’ Crucifixion (in 66 AD), they migrated with their precious belongings to Pella across the Jordan. (Hist. Eccl. 3:5) Only then, the schism between Judaism and the Christian sect within Judaism became unbridgeable, because the Judeo-Christian fugitives of Pella dissociated themselves from the violence of war. They were seen to have placed themselves in the camp of the despicable Roman collaborators.

The discussion on this collection of scrolls was very concise because Rev. Mahan and his entourage did not have time to get acquainted with the scrolls. They must have assumed that after the publication of the ArchkoVolume, further studies would follow. Yet no interest was shown by the scientific community. Why should anyone be interested in something that presumably did not exist! Nonetheless, they do exist. Probably the discovery would have evoked more interest if Mahan had found the scrolls half rotten and eaten away at some garbage dump in the desert. We should not grieve, because these documents are not rotting away and they should still be in Istanbul or nearby, where they await a thorough investigation by a group of competent experts. This archive contains explosive material! This is how the ArchkoVolume should be considered: a preliminary study. There was no follow-up or efforts thereto, as if the consequences of a real and historical Christ are difficult to swallow.

### ***10 – The Book of Jasher, a case in point***

The Book of Jasher (Sefer Ha-Yashar) offers an interesting case in point. The Talmud identifies the Book of Jasher with the books of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, known as the upright. Sefer Ha-Yashar literally means Book of the Upright. This also refers to the book of Genesis. I point out that in Jewish practice Genesis is commonly known as Brei’sheet after the first words used in the Genesis account. Jasher is the source of Joshua 10:12-13 and 2 Samuel 1:17-27. This masterpiece is hardly known yet, even amongst scholars. Jasher follows the books of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua. There are some events recorded in Jasher that are found in the Talmud, no doubt copied from Jasher, for although we find in the Talmud many parables and fanciful tales, for moral and religious purposes, yet everything that we have in Jasher we find recorded in the Bible, with this difference, that in it the occurrences of the Bible are amplified and detailed at length. It sheds light on Biblical stories from the time of Adam and Eve, the ministry of Enoch, and the account of the Great Deluge during the days of Noah up to the Tower of Babel, the great Nimrod, and faithful Abraham and his descendants. An interesting part is brought to the limelight in my article “The binding of Isaac”. The introductory notes to the first English edition of 1840 have now been made available by me under “Internet Archive, Ancient Book of Jasher-1stEd”. (25) These notes are im-

portant in order to get and understanding of the work, and yet they do not appear in most of the modern editions.

The Hebrew introduction to Jasher (26) tells that when Jerusalem was ransacked during the Great War (66-70 AD), a Roman officer from Spain, by the name of Sidrus, discovered a great many books in a private library, which he brought to what is now called Seville, but then Hispalis. As is written: “*Now, this Book of Jasher was the best and most valuable of all.*” From thence it was conveyed to the Jewish College at Cordoba. The printer’s preface to the Hebrew edition implicates that when the Jewish persecution started in Spain, after the Moors had been driven out, the book was taken out of the country with the Jewish fugitives after which its whereabouts remain uncertain. At troubled times for Jews, it was brought to Venice after the installation of a modern printing press there. I have the Hebrew edition, printed in 1990 by Mîyshôr in Israel.

John P. Pratt wrote an article “How Did the Book of Jasher Know?” that appeared in the Meridian Magazine (Jan. 7, 2002), a Mormon issue. It says:

«« There are at least three books published in modern times which have been called Book of Jasher, which are entirely different books. One is a Hebrew treatise on ethics, for which no one makes the claim of being a lost book of Scripture. Another is an easily detected fraud, published in 1751 (27), which claims to have been translated into English by Flaccus Albinus Alcuinus. It is still in print, so if you obtain a copy of the Book of Jasher, make sure it is not that one. It is sometimes called Pseudo-Jasher. (...) As early as 1629 the Puritans demanded that it be removed from the King James version, and in 1827, Protestant Bible societies took a definite stand against it. (...) Ours is a legitimate Hebrew document [hardly known beyond Jewish circles in 1827] and is the subject of this article in the Meridian. (...) It was first translated into English by a Jewish scholar named Mr. Samuel of Liverpool, England. (28) Mr. Samuel was in the process of translation when the above mentioned fraudulent work was republished in England in 1829. Before he saw it, he published a letter stating that he was also translating the same book, unaware that the other was a complete hoax. By 1833 booklets were published to expose the fraudulent claims of the Pseudo-Jasher, making England a difficult locale for him to publish the legitimate version. (...) Because of the hostile British climate, Samuel sold his translation to M. M. Noah & A. S. Gould, a New York publisher. It was published there in 1840, away from the scandal. »»

The translation made by Mr. Samuel was based on a printed version of 1625 in Venice and a much later one from Lemberg. The printer’s preface shows that it was a painful transcript, or copy of that transcript, based on a very old and almost illegible Hebrew record. The work for printing the Hebrew version started in 1613 by order of the rabbinic consistory at Venice. Important is that it was undertaken with their consent and under their supervision, for they alone had the authority to publish such works from the Hebrew records “*as they deemed authentic*”. This alone testifies to the veracity of the document, but there are more arguments that speak in its favor, which will be discovered when reading the text itself after having familiarised oneself with the introductory notes of the first English edition by Noah & Gould. After this version was introduced to the world, the story was invented, just as with the Zohar, that the book was most likely written in Spain in about the 12<sup>th</sup> century of our age, obviously to put the general public on the wrong track, because there is no trace of the claim in the 1625 Hebrew edition. It so happens that, officially, no finds are accepted of the Jewish literature predating the Mishna by fear of contradictions. There are ancient works still to be found, but something that in the mind does not exist, is more difficult to find, and if found is more easily dismissed. As the editor Mordecai Noah wrote in the preface:

«« Without giving it to the world as a work of Divine inspiration, or assuming the responsibility to say that it is ‘not’ an inspired book, I have no hesitation in pronouncing it a work of great antiquity and interest, and a work that is entitled, even regarding it as a literary curiosity, to a great circulation among those who take pleasure in studying the Scriptures. (And the translator continues:) If commentators upon the Holy Scriptures have sought for illustrations in the works of Homer, Pliny, Herodotus, and other profane writers; if they have anxiously caught at glimmerings among the absurdities of paganism, and the obscurities of heathen fables, the translator humbly and respectfully hopes that they will now grant a favorable reception to evidence of an entirely opposite character, which is presented in the Book of Jasher. He does not recommend it to their notice as a work of inspiration, but as a monument of history, comparatively covered with the ivy of the remotest ages; as a work possessing, in its language, all the characteristic simplicity of patriarchal times; and as such, he conceives it peculiarly calculated to illustrate and confirm the sacred truths handed down to us in the Scriptures. But in making these observations, he is far from offering it as a perfect record. Like all other ancient writings, except the inspired volume, it has in some respects suffered from the consuming hand of time; and there is reason to believe that some additions have been made to it. In fine, it contains a history of the lives and memorable transactions of all the illustrious characters recorded in sacred history, from Adam down to the time of the Elders, who immediately succeeded Joshua. »»

Because of the earlier frauds, the Noah & Gould edition never seems to have had a favourable reception. After publication it more or less disappeared into oblivion. (29) Why? Undoubtedly because of the reason mentioned, but also because the translation of the Hebrew preface recounts:

«« So Sidrus broke down the wall in the building and found a cask full of various books of the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa, also books of the kings of Israel, and of the kings of other nations, as well as many other books of Israel, **together with the books (later) adopted and established by the Mishnah.** »»

Why is it that reference to a written tradition earlier than the Mishnah-proper is taboo? Quite simply. Shall the lion jump without roaring?

«« Surely the Lord our God does nothing, unless He reveals his secret to his servants the prophets [inspired men]. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord our God has spoken! Who can but prophesy? »» (Amos 3:7-8)

In the old days, God must have prepared his beloved people for the advent of the Messiah, his only-begotten Son. Not only Melker's Report - but other harbingers and prophetic messages must have been there too, which were reflected in the ancient writings and kept in the temple records. It is reasonable to assume that Judah the Nasi and his disciples, while recording the Mishna, had a tendency to omit those kind of signposts. This way of being, this circumstance, is unacceptable, because it constitutes an attack on the documentation history. The Jews in their stubbornness have found unexpected allies within the Christian nomenclature. That explains why both the Book of Jasher and the Archko-Volume, regardless of the arguments put forward, were excluded from the 'accepted literature for scientific research' by Jewish and Christian influential persons alike.

### ***11 – The Sayings of Jesus, and not The Gospel of Thomas***

The common name for The Sayings of Jesus is as of yet The Gospel of Thomas, which was found in 1945 in Upper Egypt. Bernhard Pick starts his discussion of the sayings of Jesus as follows, in "The Extra Canonical Life of Christ" # 1903:



«« The newly discovered ‘Sayings’ or ‘Logia’ at Al-Bahnasa in Middle Egypt have more than a passing interest. They bring before us the fact that, besides the sayings of Jesus recorded in the canonical gospels, there were also current uncanonical or extra-canonical sayings reported by authors who did not derive them from the Gospels, but from sources which are now lost. The first, who made a collection of such extra-canonical sayings, was J. E. Grabe, who in his “Codex ‘Apocryphus Novi Testamenti’” (1698) published sixteen extra-canonical dicta Christi, to which he added a few more in the third part of his codex in 1719. In 1776 J. C. Körner issued his “De sermonibus Christi” in which the term *agrapha* is first used, and 16 such *agrapha* are given. In 1839 Fr. Klöpfer published in his “Dicta Christi Apocrypha” 24 dicta. Since that time collections of *agrapha* were published by different writers [of which he mentions more than fifty]. »»

The Modernists pretend that the New Testament Gospels are an elaboration of some kind of book, which scientists have been looking for. And then they shout eureka when they found a so-called Gospel of Thomas. This is outrageous, because it is no more than a collection of sayings of Jesus. Yet, this collection has some merit, but it has nothing to do with the genesis of the New Testament Gospels. It is no more and no less “The Sayings of Jesus” or the *agrapha* of Jesus. The Gospel of Thomas is a collection of 114 sayings, like the “Pirkei Avot” (Sayings of the Fathers), as part of the Mishna. (30) The Pirkei consists of statements made by respected Jewish scholars, especially Hillel the Elder (ca 45 BC - ca 5 AD). Hillel summarised the essence of the Jewish faith in the well known saying: “*What you do not want to happen to you, do not do to your fellow*”. Indirectly, Jesus responds to this with a text from Leviticus 19:18, in which the essence is better stated – and a higher if more difficult way is shown (Mt. 22:39): “*Love thy neighbour as thyself*”. (31) To call the Sayings of Jesus a gospel is an affront to faith and truth, as if the canonical Gospels are an invention by means of an amplification of an earlier source (called Q from the German Quelle).



*Fragment of the so-called ‘Gospel of St. Thomas’*

Professor Harold Bloom, co-author of “The Book of J” and author of “The American Religion”, believes this one was put down in writing by Jesus’ twin brother called Judas Thomas – literally! – but in the book of Thomas, first translated in English in 1959, is written (138:4-10): “*Jesus says: it is said (i.e. other people say) you are my twin and my true friend*”, thus twin in the spiritual sense. In my view they are genuine sayings of Jesus and it certainly is not a hypothetical «Q» document. They love to call it a «Q» document because, as Bloom puts it, “*it spares us the crucifixion, makes the resurrection unnecessary, and does not present us with a God named Jesus*”. Jesus made wine from



water. Here, Harold Bloom (whose comments and translation I have used) shows how to turn wine into vinegar! (32)

The manuscripts in question were found in 1945 at the so-called Nag Hammadi Library in Upper Egypt (as Codex II:2). They are also known as the Chenoboskion Manuscripts. At the time twelve leather-bound papyrus codices, buried in a sealed jar, were found by a local farmer, which also included a partial translation of Plato's Republic. The Sayings of Jesus were copied probably in the middle of the fourth century. They are in the Sahidic dialect of the Coptic language. The original is believed to have been written in Greek, possibly as early as the first century. Three parts of these same Sayings were also found in a garbage dump at Oxyrhynchus, the modern Al-Bahnasa in Egypt (under registration 1, 654, 655), which contained many thousands of papyri, mostly fragmentary, discovered from 1897 onwards. The Sayings were first published in a photographic edition in 1956. In 1977, James M. Robinson edited the first complete collection of English translations of the Nag Hammadi texts. In his introduction Robinson suggests that these codices may have belonged to a nearby Pachomian monastery, and were buried after Athanasius condemned the use of non-canonical books in his Festal Letter of the year 367. The so-called Gospel of Thomas has been translated now and annotated in many languages. The original manuscript belongs to the Coptic Museum in Cairo.

The introduction goes as follows: *"These are the apocryphal (or hidden) sayings that the living Jesus spoke and Judas Thomas recorded."* From Anna-Katarina Emmerick we know that Thaddeus was the travelling companion of the apostle Thomas Didymus (Thomas the Twin), a story confirmed by Eusebius of Caesarea (Hist. Eccl. 1:12 sqq.), who also points out that this Thaddeus was one of the seventy disciples and not the Apostle Judas Thaddeus, who was one of the twelve.

According to Eusebius (confirmed by Anna-Katarina), Thomas sent his companion in the year 30 with a letter to Abgar Uchama the Toparch of Edessa, an ancient town near Urfa in Turkey. The Greek Oxyrhynchus 654:1-3 reads: *"These are the (...) sayings that the living Jesus spoke [and were recorded by Judas Thaddeus, as well as Thomas]"* (the sections between brackets are lost in the original). Maybe the Coptic leaves open the possibility of rendering the introduction as follows: *"These are the apocryphal sayings that the living Jesus spoke, recorded by both Judas and Thomas."* We should not forget that the Coptic text supposedly is a translation of a much earlier Greek text and so an error of translation may have occurred even at that early stage, and this error may have caused the Syrians to call the apostle Thomas: 'Judas Thomas', but of course Thomas is not known by this name, neither in the Gospels nor elsewhere in the tradition. Yet his travelling companion Thaddeus is also known under the name Judas. Judas, the apostle, is only called Thaddeus at the beginning of Jesus' mission, during the election of the twelve (Mt 10:3, Mark 3:18). Later, after the 70 (or 72) had been chosen, he is always called differently: Judas (brother) of James in Acts 1:13 (33), or Judas not Iscariot in John 14:22, evidently to prevent a confusion with the Judas Thaddeus from the seventy and to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Jesus. (N.B. Judas the 'brother', not the son of James whose father was Alpheus – cf. Maria Valtorta 691, or story 551 where Judas is called the [son] of Alpheus.)

That no true believer, having taken cognisance of this unfortunately somewhat elaborate explanation, any longer dares to call "The Sayings of Jesus" the Gospel of Thomas, since then he would be joining the ranks of Sadducee Harold Bloom, who demeans the Crucifixion of Christ and his resurrection to the level of pure fantasy (see Acts 23:8).

---

**CONCLUSION:**

*Many talk about Christ. A hypothetical Christ is easy to live with – but a real Christ, the Christ of the Gospels? No way! Anything that points at the real Christ is pushed aside and made ridiculous, even by those on whom we rely and pretend to be just the opposite. This is the lot that befell the ArchkoVolume, the Book of Jasher, and also the Sayings of Jesus. The acknowledgement of a real Christ and a living God is hard to admit – for it forces us to look at things differently and to change our way of life.*

---



***Hagia Sophia, Istanbul (Constantinople) - Turkey***

## Notes

### Where is the old Hagia Sophia library now?

(1) Reverend Mahan writes that the documents, which he found in Istanbul, originally came from the Imperial Library founded by Constantius II, which had many documents pertaining to the early Christian age. However, in “The History of the Library in Western Civilization” (Oak Knoll Press – 2004) Konstantinos Sp. Staikos writes (Vol. I): “*Unfortunately we have practically no information about the books that went into the new ‘imperial’ library founded by Constantius II in Constantinople in 357.*” That is all he has to say on the matter. This clashes with the findings of the ArchkoVolume. I tried to find the possible whereabouts of the new premises of the old Hagia Sophia library, but could find nothing. Yet, in Edgar Goodspeed’s appraisal of the ArchkoVolume it appears that the Hagia Sophia library once existed, sound and safe, for he writes: “*General Wallace received permission from the Sultan to visit the library of the Hagia Sophia.*” For sure, the Constantius II library has since then been removed, waiting to be revealed at some future time, perhaps nobler than ours. A possible answer as to why the library of the Hagia Sophia disappeared from the official records is found in “Three Appraisals of the ArchkoVolume” under chapter 19: “The Ben-Hur controversy” and its note 46.

(2) Reverend Mahan did his work in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the period also when efforts were made that lead to the discovery and translation of the Exodus inscriptions in the Sinai (See chapter “The Historicity of the Exodus” in the compendium available on the Internet under: The Bible Word of God, SCRIBD, 56710044). Concurrently, Brooke Westcott and Fenton Hort accomplished the final revision to arrive at the original Greek of the New Testament, which had been damaged in a number of places. Their work proved vital for the establishment of the PBS (Panin Bible Statistics), as explained at the end of Part III.

(3) Reference: “The Apocryphal New Testament” by M.R. James - Oxford University Press, USA # 1924 (p. 90).

### The papal monetary system in 1857

(4) The daric did not exist. At the time, the monetary system, introduced in 1835 by Pope Gregory XVI, was still in use in the Papal States. It consisted of the scudo, which was divided into 100 baiocchi, while the baiocco was divided into 5 quattrini; 10 scudi was a gregorine. It was in 1866, after the occupation of the Papal States, that the old system was abolished in favour of the Italian lira.

### A peculiarity of writing that belongs to the age

(5) a) Latin transcripts have circulated, but quite sure these were not the originals.

b) Even in contemporary documents it is very difficult to falsify an official document. Just before election time in the Netherlands, incriminating letters were sent by a ‘worried’ German businessman to both parliamentarians and reporters, which was soon brought to the attention of the Minister of Justice, who immediately put the file ‘sub judice’, which meant that there was a publication-stop during the preliminary period of investigation. The person concerned was my father Dr Joseph Luns, then minister of Foreign Affairs. The incriminating letters pretended to reveal that bribes had been taken by my father that he might take certain decisions. The writing itself already showed it was a fake: first, the letterhead of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was out of use at the time of writing and secondly, the salutation of each letter in German sent by the Dutch ministry ended with an exclamation mark. This is common in Germany (i.e. Lieber Herr Schneider!), but not taught in German courses in the Netherlands. Thus German letters sent by Dutch ministries, at the time never use an exclamation mark after the salutation. This is an example of a peculiarity of writing that belongs to the age. Consequently, the prosecution was dropped; there were also other elements in favour of dropping the case.

### The Jewish curse against the Judeo-Christians

(6) Church Father Jerome was well aware of the strange ‘blessing’ by the Jews addressed against those of whom he said in his letter to Augustine in the year 404: “*While they desire to be both Jews and Christians, they are neither the one nor the other.*” “*The Jews*

- he said in his comment on Isaiah 5:18-19 - *curse three times a day in all their synagogues the Christian name, while disguising it by the name of Nazarene (Natsrim).*” Remarkably, Nazarene is also used a number of times in the Koran to designate Christians in a less than favorable way. In the time of Jerome the curse went as follows: “*For apostates may there be no hope, and may the Nazarenes and the deviants (minim) perish immediately!*” This was modified more than once. One less detrimental version reads: “*That no hope exists for the apostates of religion, and that all the deviants, whoever they are, perish immediately! That the reign of pride be uprooted, that it will be destroyed very soon and in our days. Be blessed, Oh Lord our God, who destroys the impudent and humiliates the superb!*”

Rabbi Hakkaton’s prayer was included in the Shemoneh to replace the one directed against those who had separated themselves from the main body of the Jewish people, the kahal or congregation. The old one was directed against the Christians from the Gentiles, not against the Judeo-Christians. It was later only, once that the Judeo-Christians had disappeared, which occurred at the turn of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, that the curse was redirected to the Christians from the Gentiles, the so-called ‘minim natsrim’, henceforth known as the ‘minim’. At least, so it was understood by the Christians, and they therefore urged the Jews to revise their prayers and manner of writing. Indeed, as from the 12<sup>th</sup> century Jewish copyists replaced the term ‘min(im)’ by sadducee(s) or epicurian(s) in the rewriting of their ancient manuscripts.

Le Chevalier Drach noted that before the advent of our Saviour, the speculative theology or Kabbalah was impregnated with the sound Christian doctrine, as is no more than logical. (“De l’harmonie entre l’Église et la Synagogue” – Paris # 1844, T2: XXVI-VII) So why would not there be Judeo-Christians in the kahal? However, the sound doctrine was progressively lost, which the rabbis did not mind as it pointed too clearly towards Jesus Messiah. The most famous record concerning the existence of Judeo-Christians is from the Church Father Epiphanius (ca 315-403), who wrote in his “Refutation of all Heresies” (The Panarion) :

« « We shall now especially consider heretics who (...) call themselves Nazarenes; they are mainly Jews and nothing else. They make use not only of the New Testament, but they also use the Old Testament of the Jews; for they do not forbid the books of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. (...) They practice circumcision, persevere in the observance of those customs which are enjoined by the Law, and are so Judaic in their mode of life that they even adore Jerusalem as if it were the house of God (...) so that they are approved by the Jews from whom the Nazarenes do not differ in anything, and they profess all the dogmas pertaining to the prescriptions of the Law and to the customs of the Jews, except they believe in the Messiah. (...) They preach that there is one Elohim, and his son Yahshua the Messiah. But they are very learned in the Hebrew language; for they, like the Jews, read the whole Law, then the Prophets. (...) They differ from the Jews because they believe in the Messiah, and from the Christians in that they are to this day bound to the Jewish rites, such as circumcision, the Sabbath, and other ceremonies. » »

Irenæus (2<sup>nd</sup> cent.) noted that these Jews, who believed in the Messiah, scrupulously observed the dispensation of the Mosaic law. (Against Heresies 1:26) Evidently they were obedient to the Jewish leadership and not united with the Christians from the Gentiles (gojem) nor participated in Holy Mass, Baptism and Confession. Bonacursus wrote in the 12<sup>th</sup> century that “*they condemn and reject all the Church Fathers and the whole Roman Church.*” (in Vita Hæreticorum; Script. Spicilegium I, pp. 211-14)

Romans 11:11, 28 is true (and Deut. 32:21): “*Through their fall [the fall of the Jews], to provoke them to jealousy with them that are no nation (the Gentiles), salvation has come to the Gentiles. (...) Concerning the Gospel they are enemies for your sake.*” Why? It was their fault, according to a consistent pattern, that they as ‘God’s chosen people’ have never shown missionary zeal. I think they were not driven by hatred for Christ as the main reason why they obfuscated the true doctrine in their later traditions, still available here and there within their large body of knowledge. It was excessive jealousy that has brought them not to share their great treasures with the outsiders so that, as the apostle says, the people who are no nation could provoke them to jealousy in order to follow their ways, which of course has not happened yet.



(7) Schmiedel's article on the Gospels, wherein he says that there are only nine passages in the Gospels that we can depend upon as being the sayings of Jesus, is found in the "Encyclopedia Biblica", Vol. II - Macmillan Co., New York # 1901.

### **Constantine Simonides and the Codex Sinaiticus**

(8) Constantine Simonides attempted to make out in a clumsy way that the "Codex Sinaiticus" was a forgery. Later, this MS was proven to have been written in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Who was he? He was an exceptionally skillful calligrapher who is alleged to have sold spurious documents (as well as some that were possibly genuine) in England in the 1850s and 1860s. Among his clients were Sir Frederick Madden at the British Museum and Sir Thomas Phillipps. Simonides resided in the monasteries on Mount Athos between 1839 and 1841 and again in 1852, during which time he may have acquired some of the manuscripts he later sold. In 1862 Simonides published in English journals his false claim to have written the Codex Sinaiticus, which Constantine von Tischendorf had discovered at Mount Sinai some years earlier.

### **The documents are referred to in a fancy fashion**

(9) a) By giving the wrong shelfmark, H. C. Whydaman and his accomplices made sure the documents could not be easily found, while at the same time it casted doubt on the veracity of the documents in question. Alternatively, we may assume that Rev. Mahan did not understand how the filing system worked, but most probably he was misguided.

(9) b) Critical review by W. R. Pearse (Ipswich, Suffolk, UK) on account of the Archko-Volume, Amazon.com (May 16, 2008):

«« I investigated the 'translators' McIntosh and Twyman, and found that they are not listed as the authors of any other volume in the US Library of Congress catalogue. There is no evidence that they ever existed. The shelfmark given for the material by Valleius Paterculus, as a Vatican Library shelfmark, is wrong, as this institution classifies its manuscripts by collection, not by author. Since I am interested in other Vatican MSS, I can vouch for this myself. In fact no manuscripts of any work by Velleius Paterculus exist anywhere in the world, as the sole MS of his real history was lost during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Since he died in 30 AD, it naturally does not mention Christ. So what should Christians think? I was reminded of some wise words by the ancient Christian writer, Tertullian: *"Manifold are the ways in which the devil has sought to undermine the truth. He is now trying to crush it, by pretending to defend it."* (Adversus Praxean 1:1). Spiritually this is a snare - inviting Christians to put their trust in something false, in the hope of convincing them, when the fraud is revealed, that the Bible too is false. »»

Remarks: McIntosh and Twyman were translators and not necessarily authors of any book, and if translators of a book they are not necessarily mentioned. I like to point out that I have shown that Jesus died in 26 AD, and so Paterculus and Jesus could very well have met each other. Furthermore, it cannot be said that no work of Velleius Paterculus exists. One can only say that no work of him is known to exist, for there are still many ancient works not known to exist, but which are waiting to be found.

### **The notion of race: how did Jesus look like?**

(10) The notion of race is nearly as problematic from a scientific point of view as it is from a social one. European physical anthropologists of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries proposed various systems of racial classifications based on such observable characteristics as skin colour, hair type, body proportions, and skull measurements, essentially codifying the perceived differences among broad geographic populations of humans. The traditional terms for these populations – Caucasoid (or Caucasian), Mongoloid, Negroid, and in some systems Australoid – are now controversial in both technical and non-technical usage, and in some cases they may well be considered offensive. (Caucasian does retain a certain currency in American English, but it is used almost exclusively to mean 'white' or 'European' rather than 'belonging to the Caucasian race', a group that includes a variety of peoples generally categorised as non-white.) The biological aspect of race is described today not in observable physical features but rather in such genetic characteristics as blood groups and metabolic processes, and the groupings indicated by these

factors seldom coincide very neatly with those put forward by earlier physical anthropologists. Citing this and other points such as the fact that a person who is considered black in one society might be non-black in another, has caused a departure from the old classification. Many cultural anthropologists now consider race to be more a social or mental construct than an objective biological fact. ("Free Dictionary" by Farlex under 'race'.)

### **These they stubbornly cling to...**

(11) On the "Sirius Knotts & Thoughts" website appeared "A Critique of the Archko Library" # Jan. 5, 2008, in which Sirius Knott responds to a reader:

«« Thanks for your thoughts, James! I actually began investigating the Archko-Volume because it was being taught in our Sunday School lessons as depicting historical facts. My research proved it to be wrong. My critique of the Archko-Volume did not sit well with the venerable country preacher who'd been teaching it as genuine for the past several decades. My argument that he should not cite it from the pulpit was simple: it looks like bunk and it will be taken as bunk by pretty much anyone who investigates it; also, anything taught from the pulpit carries with it the weight of implied authority (why would we preach or teach something we think questionable?); anyone who investigates it will inevitably come to the conclusion that we preach bunk. Sadly, **in the end, the pastor decided that this was just a difference of opinion between two Bible scholars.** »»

### **The William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company**

(12) From ten cents specials for Dutch farmers in 1910 to over a thousand titles in print in 2008, the Eerdmans Publishing Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan, has firmly held to the motto established by its founder William B. Eerdmans: "*The finest in religious literature.*" The son of a Dutch textile manufacturer, Eerdmans immigrated to Grand Rapids from the Netherlands in 1902, and began peddling books to support himself while attending Calvin Theological Seminary. In 1911 Eerdmans quit the seminary, convinced that he would be "*a misfit in the ministry*", and that same year he and Brant Sevensma (a Dutch name too) formed a dealership specialising in theological textbooks. By 1915 Eerdmans became sole owner of the company, then named the WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO. Eerdmans' reputation gradually spread through philanthropic book awards, through generous financial backing of Christian organisations, and through his propensity for publishing only those books which lived up to standards of excellence. In the Fall 1945 issue of "Eerdmans' Quarterly Observer", William Eerdmans elaborated on the scope of the company:

«« We should not limit ourselves to a certain field or type of book. There are good books in all the various phases of life and human experience. We should feed our minds with a variety of thoughts, as we do our stomachs with a variety of foods. (...) Great books are like mountain tops. They take us toward the skies, a new realm, and a new vision of the world and creation (...) The greatest of all books are those that bring us near Divine truth, with a message of righteousness to all mankind. »»

### **The Hitler-diaries Hoax**

(13) On April 22, 1983 the glossy German news magazine Stern issued a press release announcing what it promised was "*the most important historical event of the last ten years*". It had discovered the personal diary of Adolf Hitler – a massive, multi-volume work spanning the years 1932-1945. Stern's announcement generated a media frenzy. Magazines and news agencies bid for the right to serialise the diary. Journalists, historians, and World War II buffs eagerly anticipated what revelations it might contain. Skeptics, however, insisted it had to be a fake. The skeptics turned out to be right. Less than two weeks after Stern's initial announcement, forensic experts at the West German Bundesarchiv issued a press release of their own, denouncing the diaries as a "*crude forgery*". The debunking of the diaries proved just as sensational as their discovery. Careers were ruined, and people went to jail. When all the dust settled, the diaries turned out to be one of the most expensive fakes in history. By some accounts, the entire debacle cost Stern as much as 19 million marks. (written by Alex Boese and taken from the Hoaxipedia)



### The 'brothers' of Jesus

(14) The Greek 'adelphos', according to Strong's 80 means: "a brother, near or remote". If we want to get to the core of the meaning of a Greek word in the New Testament it may help to look at the similar Hebrew word. I remind the reader that Hebrew was still a living language in Jerusalem and its surroundings, as expounded in "The Jewish vernacular in Jesus' time" (in the compendium by undersigned, available on the Internet under: The Bible Word of God, SCRIBD, 56710044). The writers of the New Testament were accustomed to talk, read and think in Hebrew and therefore the New Testament Greek have connotations based on Hebrew. The Hebrew 'ach' (Strong's 251), from which the Greek 'adelphos' (Strong's 80) is a transcription, has a larger range of meanings than the Greek. Strong's defines 'ach' as follows: "*Brother, used in the widest sense of lit. relationship and metaph. affinity or resemblance, like: another, brother(-ly), kindred, like, other.*" Therefore, it also includes 'kindred'. In view of the foregoing the sons of Joseph's brothers can rightly be called the brothers of Jesus.

(15) I have not been able to find the original source that "*taking ship for Massalia*" (Μασσαλία/on far end of the sea) is an ancient Greek proverb to indicate someone's homosexual leanings. Can anyone be of help?

(16) When we look at the illustrations in children's Bibles, all the Biblical figures are pictured as the average Arab. Jesus often looks Arabic. The Dutch have this on their conscience. Somehow, the Dutch Calvinists got the notion that Israel was a Bedouin tribe and that Abraham was a kind of Arab sheik. See: "Jews and Arabs: their contacts through the ages" by Solomon D. Goitein - Schocken Books # 1955.

### The real face of Jesus

(17) In 2002 Nichard Neave tried to make a reconstruction of the average facial expression of the Jew in Jesus' time, based on three ancient Semite skulls from the region, using computerised tomography. See Appendix-1: "Real Face of Jesus a Sham".

There was an internetblog with the following comment on the famous picture of Jesus, made by Warner Sallman:

«« I've seen this portrait time and again. Jesus was of Aramaic decent. I happen to be Arabic, from Iraq. I am not dark at all, and my hair is a naturally light brown. My Mum, in fact, has brothers with red hair. Arabic people do not need to be dark haired and brown. Besides, Jesus was a Jew of Davidic descent. »»

(18) Because of the desire to keep the purity of the Davidic branch, adultery by a woman was considered a far greater offence than by a man. In the woman's case, the foreign seed had polluted the branch, but if the man committed adultery the branch remained pure.

### Almah in Isaiah 7:14

(19) In Jewish translations the word 'almah' of Isaiah 7:14 is consistently rendered as 'a young woman' or 'maid' in order to discredit the belief in Jesus as the Messiah. Many Christian experts consider the Septuagint as evidence that the only correct translation of almah is virgin. (The Septuagint translation of the Old Testament was made several hundred years before Christ by Jewish scribes.) However, this 'evidence' stems from a one-sided approach. One should look at the Hebrew itself to arrive at that conclusion. Ronald L. Troxel from the University of Wisconsin has written an elaborate article on Isaiah 7:14-16: "Through the Eyes of the Septuagint" (Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, 2005), as concerns the understanding of the translation of the Hebrew 'almah' (עַלְמָה) in parthenos (παρθένος): which by all the main dictionaries is rendered as maiden or girl, which 'by implication' is a virgin. Troxel concludes: "*It is clear that the translator's concern was not with the character of the child's mother, but with that of the child. That topic captured his attention, as attested by his interpretation of verses 15 and 16 in light of concepts he brought to the text and found implicit in it.*" The Biblical verse is, based on the Hebrew: "*Behold, the virgin (almah) shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call his name God-With-Us (Immanuel).*"

(20) Taken from the Sayings of Jesus (wrongly called "The Gospel of Thomas", 'saying 78', translated by Marvin Meyer, in full).

### **The Letter of Sherira**

(21) Rab Sherira Gaon (gaon for 'venerable') was head of a famous academy. His ancestors held the position of Rash Galuth or 'exiled monarch' of the Jews. There can be little doubt that in the geonic academies (6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century) the Talmudic tradition was treated first and foremost as oral literature. Sherira himself had a marked preference for rote learning. His most famous work is the Iggeret (Epistle), written in Aramaic and partly in Arabic, made accessible in a French recension (there is also a Spanish one). It was written about the year 968 in reply to an inquiry from a North African Jewish community. One of the questions to be answered was:

«« How was the Mishnah recorded? Was it written down in stages, beginning from the time of the Men of the Great Synagogue [in the first era after the Babylonian Exile] until Rabbi Judah the Nasi, who finally compiled and edited the Mishnah books, or alternatively, did Rabbi Judah write it down for the first time? In that case, why was not the Mishnah recorded earlier? »»

He begins his letter by explaining how the tradition, including the Halakha, was handed down by the Men of the Great Synagogue, who in their turn had received it in a long chain going back to Moses. Each generation handed it down to the next in an unbroken chain. At first, he explains, there was no need to write the oral tradition down, because there were brilliant teachers who memorised everything to the letter. Moreover, there were hardly clashes of opinion then. During the cruel suppression of the Bar Kochba revolt (132-135 AD), the Jewish schools closed and many teachers were killed; much was forgotten and important differences of opinion arose. It therefore became necessary to collect the tradition and write it down, work done by Rabbi Judah with the aid of the leading scholars of his time. And this is how it was told, but as we shall see, it is incorrect.

### **Hadrian's Edict**

(22) The last revolt against the Romans, that lasted from 132 to 135 AD, was fought under famous rebel leader Bar Kochba. This ended in a terrible ordeal and with large scale devastation over the whole country. More than a million Jews perished or were sold as slaves. The Temple Mount was sown with salt and all that remained was the Western Wall. An ambitious reconstruction programme was started, dedicated to Roman grandeur. Jupiter Capitolinus got his temple in Jerusalem on top of the Holy Sepulchre that had been leveled off with rubble. In the new temple stood an equestrian statue of Emperor Hadrian who hated both Jews and Christians. Venus got her temple on top of a pile of rubble on Mount Calvary. The Romans erased the name of Judeah from official use, choosing deliberately to call the country Palestine, named after the since long extinct people of the Philistines. This change of name was followed by the ruthless suppression of the Jewish intellectual life. The Roman Emperor perfectly understood the religious motives behind the rebellion and he was well aware that the Jewish religion conferred a sense of community and strength to its people. Circumcision, keeping the sabbath, or any observance of Jewish laws were forbidden. Any study of Jewish lore was made punishable by torture and death. Even the possession of the Torah (Pentateuch) had become a capital offence. Rabbi Judah ben Bava was one of many who was put to death, in his case for ordaining six pupils at Usha. His pupils escaped and were later to become the leaders of a new academy. The pages of Jewish history covering this dark period are full of the names of martyrs who were killed for the infringement of Hadrian's Edict. This lasted three full years until the Emperor's death, but the damage inflicted in this short period was great. Under his successor, Antonius Pius, a more liberal policy was pursued and scribes were at liberty to resume their calling. In consequence, many of the exiles – the few who had survived the massacres – returned, among them a group of disciples that had been taught by Rabbi Akiba, who himself had been put to death for defying the Edict. The task of the survivors was to recover and complete the work of their predecessors, in which task they found inspiration in the teachings of Ben Zakkai, the rabbi who safeguarded the permanent instruction, even before Titus succeeded in destroying the Temple, an event that happened in 70 AD. In this concentration of effort the centre of Jewish learning and authority in Palestine shifted to Galilee, first to its capital Sepphoris and vicinity, and ultimately to Tiberias, where the foundation was laid for the future Talmud. The Talmud would become the instrument by which, throughout the ages, Jewry, in spite of its dispersion among the nations and its merciless persecution, could maintain its identity.

### **The Mishnah-lamod was written by a pupil of Hillel**

(23) Reverend Mahan calls this pupil Hillel the Second. That is confusing, because Hillel the Second, as known in the Talmud, lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Hillel the Elder**

(24) Hillel the Elder is a very important figure in the Talmudic literature. The Elder lived from the second half of the first century BC until the first quarter of the first century AD. Although a strictly biographical account of the Elder cannot be set forth - for virtually every narrative about him is incrustated with legend - the literary sources do combine coherently to summon up what may be called the first distinct personality of Talmudic Judaism. Put another way, it can be said that the life of Hillel the Elder is more than a vague recollection of anecdotes or a name with a saying or two attached; in the Sayings of the Fathers (Pirkei Avot) he is quoted more than any other sage. Hillel is unquestionable one of the most influential practitioners of a conscious, carefully applied exegetical discipline necessary for a proper explanation of the Bible. It is therefore not unrealistic to agree that one of his pupils has entrusted much of the Halakhic tradition to writing. (The information on Hillel the Elder is from "The New Encyclopædia Britannica", 15<sup>th</sup> ed. # 1974, 1991)

(25) The Book of Jasher, being discussed, is not correctly described in Wikipedia. The editions of Jasher offered at Amazon.com do not include the introductory notes of the English edition of 1840 and are therefore of little value.

(26) Although the undersigned owns the Hebrew edition, he necessarily has to rely on the English rendering of the Noah & Gould's edition of 1840, for he cannot read Hebrew.

(27) In "Bibliographical Notes on the Book of Jasher" by Reverend Thomas Hartwell Horne of St John's College, Cambridge - Spottiswoode, London # 1833, Horne calls it, actually the Pseudo-Jasher, "*a literary forgery, contained in the volume or rather 'pamphlet' (very cheap paper), and printed in the year 1751.*" This explains why copies of this edition are virtually non-existent, for most copies must have rotten away.

(28) The translator of the Book of Jasher was Mr. Samuel, so states John P. Pratt. His name is not given in the 1840 edition and his initials I do not know.

(29) The English edition of the Book of Jasher is neglected and seems not to appear in any compendium of Apocrypha and Pseudo-epigrapha. It is not discussed by Edgar Goodspeed in his "Modern Apocrypha, Famous Biblical Hoaxes" (he only discusses the English Jasher editions from before 1840). As concerns our Book of Jasher, Wikipedia only mentions: "*Sefer haYashar (midrash): A book of Jewish legends covering the period from the creation of man to the first wave of the conquest of Canaan, not certain to have existed before 1625.*" We may take this to be the official position.

(30) The Mishna, meaning 'quotation', is the reflection of the Jewish oral tradition. It was written down from the end of the second century AD and signals the start of the development of the Talmud.

### **Love thy neighbour as thyself**

(31) Matthew 22:39 corresponds to Matthew 7:12: "*Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*"

(32) a) "The Gospel of Thomas - The Hidden Sayings of Jesus", a new translation by Marvin Meyer, with an interpretation by Harold Bloom – Harper San Francisco # 1992.

### **Objective research starts with a thesis or statement**

(32) b) With regard to Bloom's conceited remark about Christ's Crucifixion and resurrection I point out that in conformity with the "Lamentabili Sane" of Pope St. Pius X and "Fides et Ratio" of Pope Joan Paul II, neutral antecedent study of the Bible is impossible because objective research cannot take place until the Articles of Faith have been accep-

ted or rejected – in particular those that state that the Bible is God’s Word and that Christ is the Son of God, who died and rose from the dead on the third day. Fides et Ratio puts it as follows (n° 55): “*The ‘supreme rule of her faith’ derives from the unity which the Spirit has created between Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church in a reciprocity which means that none of the three can survive without the others*”, thereby referring to Vatican II (Dei Filius III): “*Reason is never able to penetrate (these mysteries) as it does the truths which are its proper object (of knowledge).*” This is correctly stated, yet the distinction between the secular realm of investigation and the religious one is not as clear-cut as often pretended. Already the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, living around 500 BC, said that “*Due to its unbelievable nature, the truth (or the reality as it exists) escapes being known for what it is.*” We all know that an investigation starts with an assumption or hypothesis. The assumption is related to what we ‘believe’ to be true or what appears reasonable. But reality is often far from reasonable to our destitute mind. One needs an open mind to access the unreasonable, that is to say, to access what escapes our understanding at that point in time. This way of gaining knowledge is expressed by the saying that the answer proceeds from the question. But how to ask the right question if beforehand we have forsaken its answer?

I must say that it is refreshing to see someone like Harold Bloom show his true colours. Many ‘too’ credulous Christians have been put on the wrong track by Judases pretending to accept the articles of faith while in fact rejecting them. Despite the basic assumption that the Bible should be approached from a position of belief, it offers so many logical results that agree with the articles of faith that God’s people does not need to believe solely on the grounds of ‘the Bible says so’ or ‘the Church says so’, but it may also experience that it is reasonable to believe, which is no small argument, now that in our days the goddess Reason has been placed on God’s throne, while it should have been: ‘Fides et Ratio’ (faith and reason) ...on the road towards God.

### **Judas the brother of Jacob (in Acts. 1:13)**

(33) The basic text allows for the translation ‘son of Jacob’ instead of ‘brother’. Brother agrees with the Vulgate as well as the special French translation from 1975-76: “Traduction œcuménique de la Bible” (TOB).

• • •

# A Mare's Nest from Missouri

A discussion of *The ArchkoVolume*, by M. R. James (1900)

Montague Rhodes James (1862-1936) was a provost of King's College, Cambridge, and of Eton College afterwards. He is remembered for his ghost stories in the classic Victorian Yuletide vein, which are regarded as among the finest in English literature. He was a noted scholar on apocryphal Christian literature. His "The Apocryphal New Testament" was published by Oxford University Press in 1924. Since then it has been regularly reprinted, and still recently, in 1993, in an expanded and thoroughly revised version. In its foreword J. K. Elliott testifies that "*Montague Rhodes James was a pioneer – he discovered, identified, and published many apocryphal texts. His erudition and encyclopædic knowledge of the world of early Christianity are clearly evident in his writings. The present volume owes a great deal to his inspiration and example.*"

## The ArchkoVolume *or the*

**Archeological Writings of the Sanhedrim  
and Talmuds of the Jews**

(intra secus)

These are the Official Documents made in these Courts in the Days of Jesus Christ.

Translated by Drs. McINTOSH and TWYMAN  
of the Antiquarian Lodge, Genoa, Italy.

From Manuscripts in Constantinople  
*and the*

Records of the Senatorial Docket taken from the Vatican at Rome.

### 11 - Introduction

This is a true copy of the title-page of *The ArchkoVolume*, and the hopes it raises are in no way dashed by what follows. One really does not know where to begin the description of it. Something must clearly be attempted. The responsible editor appears to be the Rev. W. D. Mahan, of Boonville, Mo. (Mo. is for Missouri, as Ga. for Georgia: cf. "The Wrong Box" by R. L. Stevenson and G. L. Osbourne). He it is who entered the work in 1887 and 1896 in the office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington, and he it is who furnishes the magnificent Prolegomena. The two Doctors McIntosh and Twyman (the former 'of Scotland', the latter 'of England') are only answerable for the translation of the Senatorial Docket and the rest. Whether Rev. Mahan is the author of that stimulating word *Archko*, and what precisely he means by it, are among the points that have eluded me as yet. There are others, but it would be premature to press them before the reader has been told more about the scope and contents of the *ArchkoVolume* generally.

## 12 – Discussion of the arguments put forward

Chapter 1 tells us “How these Records were Discovered”, and that is exactly what we should all like to know. ‘En avant!’

«« Some time in the year 1856, while living in De Witt, Missouri, a gentleman by the name of H.C. Whydaman became snow-bound and stopped at my house several days. »»

The evidence derivable from the context makes it probable that it was Rev. Mahan who was living in De Witt, and Mr. Whydaman who ‘became snow-bound’. Whydaman was a native of Germany and one of the most learned men Rev. Mahan had ever met. Mahan found him to be freely communicative. He had spent five years in the city of Rome and most of the time in the Vatican, where he saw a library containing 560,000 volumes. He “*had seen and read the records of Tiberius Caesar, and in what was called the Acta Pilati*” – that is, the Acts of Pilate (34) – he had seen an account of the trial of Jesus. Correspondence ensued, Rev. Mahan being anxious for a transcript of the report. Mr. Whydaman “*has written to Father Freelinhusen, a monk of great learning at Rome, who is the chief guardian of the Vatican.*” Freelinhusen informs him:

«« That the writing is so fine, and being in the Latin language, as I told you, and the parchments so old and dirty, he will be obliged to use a glass to the most of it. (...) He says to do it for 35 darics, which will be in American coin \$ 62.44. »»

Apparently the daric was still current in the Papal States in 1857. (35) Its precise relation to the dollar can be worked out from the above ‘data’ by readers of the Guardian at their leisure. Rev. Mahan forwarded the dollars and received the transcript, and Whydaman’s brother-in-law got \$10 more for translating it. Such was the effect of the document upon Mahan that he determined to investigate the subject, and on September 21<sup>st</sup> 1883, he set sail for foreign lands to make that investigation in person. And here we have a digression of some length, which tells us how the discoverer made up his mind that some such documents as he has now given to the world must be in existence. He had long wondered how it was that:

«« Such historians as Philo, Tacitus, Quintilian, and Josephus (one feels inclined to add Plato and Nicodemus) had told us nothing or so little about the New Testament history (...) I went to our histories - Mosheim, Lardner, Stackhouse, and others. They gave me no satisfaction.” »»

One history told him:

«« That these records were burned in the Alexandrian Library. I knew the Babylonian Talmuds were in this library, or at least most of them were; but I also knew that the Talmuds of Jerusalem were not. »»

The results of his investigation were not less remarkable than this apparently intuitive knowledge:

«« I found by investigating that Ptolemy, King of Alexandria, presented seventy books to Ezra, which he refused to place in the Holy Canon, and it came very near bringing on a bloody war. »»

He also ascertained some interesting matters about the library of one Serenus Samnaticus. Here is a specimen of a reference to authorities as understood in Boonville: “*The Torah commentator Rashi, who wrote in Paris in the eleventh century, says in Volume III*”, that there were in ancient libraries men called “*baalie suphoths*”, whose business it was to collect the parchments of the various authors, “*pin their dates together*”, and



bind them:

«« We find that the works of Philo were compiled by Pseudonymus Joseph Ben Gorion, 150 AD. This Ben Gorion was a Jewish Rabbi (...) Josephus was compiled by Ekaba, another Jewish doctor, at the close of the second century (...) Josephus was published in book-form by Havercamp, in Amsterdam, in 1729. Now all he had to guide him was what 'Ekaba' had said. So it is with Philo, which was put in book-form by Mangey, in London, in 1742; all he had was what 'Ben Gorion' had pleased to compile of his works. »» (36)

Here, again, is a fine, bold challenge to the public:

«« If the New Testament records are true, then the historical items contained in this book must be true, and if these items, or items like them, be not true, then the items of the New Testament are not true; that is, no man dare to say these are the identical items, but items like these, and why not these? They came from the right place. »»

One cannot deny a slight obscurity in the expression here; but, as Rev. Mahan might say, there are obscurities in many books and why not in this?

It is impossible to follow Rev. Mahan through every step of his closely argued introduction. But I cannot help calling attention to one or two of the incidental discoveries which marked his investigations. In the Ante-Nicene Christian Library he found "*what was called the Homilies of Clementine*". (37) Elsewhere he seems to have made use of a work in eight volumes by Colens the First (not, I believe, Bishop Colenso, but Celsus is meant) against Christianity, and of Duranzo (ought we to read Phrantzes?) "*a Greek historian who wrote 36 volumes in Constantinople in the seventh century. These histories are in the Paris library for the inspection of anyone.*" The thought has crossed my mind that in this last sentence there may be a dim reference to the Paris edition of the Byzantine historians.

Rev. Mahan has solved, among others, the problem of the Vulgate and the Old Latin, and his solution is well worth quoting. It is this:

«« The Vulgate is an ancient manuscript, taken from the Hebrew, and translated into the Latin in the second century; also one of the Greek and one of the Syriac. These are all of the same date. This Vulgate in the Latin was used in Africa. The Church of Rome was under Greek control at this time and rejected the Latin Vulgate, and used what was called at that time the *Vetus Latina*, or old Latin. This is the history of Tertullian.

In the fourth century, Jerome tells us, there was another translation of the Vulgate, under the instruction of St. Augustine, and St. Jerome recommends this in the highest terms. About the fifth century there was another translation made, which is called the *Codex*, in the Latin language. There was one at Alexandria, one in the Vatican, and one at Sinai. Parts of these are preserved in the British Museum (...) The *Codex of Sinai* is in the Greek. »»

I must again renounce the idea of enlarging upon the results which would follow from the acceptance of this statement. That they would be momentous there can be little doubt, precisely what they would be probably no human being can tell:

«« Another question arises in the mind of the reader, and that is: How was it possible for these writings to be preserved so long? I answer that there are many works much older than these in existence. Homer is 900 years older; why not these? »»

Truly a headsplitting question. Grant for a moment that these documents 'are' 900 years older - which appears to be what we are asked to do, then 'ex hypothesi' Homer is 900 years older than they are, and we suppose that they must be 900 years older than that. In fact, we are carried very swiftly by this fascinatingly simple process into the very dawn of history:

«« Then it may be asked again: May not I be deceived? May not these men [Dr. McIntosh of Scotland, and Dr. Twyman of England] have imposed upon me? To this I would say: That is impossible. »»

And what could be more satisfactory than that?

### ***13 – Pièces justificatives***

More quotations from ancient authors follow, and more close and soul-satisfying argument. Then we come to the 'pièces justificatives' - letters from Dr. McIntosh (of Scotland) to the people of North America, from Rev. Mahan to his wife, dated Marketplace, City of Rome, Italy, in which we have a stirring account of his voyage. "*I was awful sick*", he writes, with a noble simplicity. There are, too, notices of his meeting with Dr. McIntosh at St. Elgin, and of a "*holy auditory*" of the Pope (which took place in a room 300ft. square), of the work in the Vatican, and of many, many other "*items*" of absorbing interest. Next, General J. B. Douglass writes to inform us that he saw the papers which Rev. Mahan brought back to Boonville, Mo., and that he "*was impressed at the time with the belief, from the writing and spelling, that the parties were of foreign birth and education.*" Whether the parties meant are Pilate and Caiaphas, or merely Dr. McIntosh and Dr. Twyman, the gallant General leaves to our discretion to determine. Notaries public, clerks of circuit, and attorneys-at-law finally appear to confirm the existence of the General and of Reverend Mahan, and the fact that they loaned him 200 dollars, shortly after which he disappeared from Boonville, Mo., for a considerable time.

### ***14 – Provenance and description of the documents***

The rest of the introduction is not characterised by so much brilliancy. We will pass over it, and come to the newly discovered documents. But we must deal with them very shortly, for it '*must*' be confessed that they are by far the least interesting part of the book. We begin with an interview of one Jonathan, with the Bethlehem shepherds, quoted from Sanhedrin 88B by R. Jose, Order No. 2, and a Report by Melker, a priest of Bethlehem, to the Higher Sanhedrin. Then there is Gamaliel's interview with Joseph and Mary. This was found in the Mosque of the Hagia Sophia, in the Talmuds of the Jews, 27 B. Gamaliel's description of Joseph is most uncomplimentary. He was tall and ugly, his eyes were gray and vicious, and "*he is as gross and glum as he looks*".

Two reports of Caiaphas were also discovered at the Hagia Sophia's, the second of these drew tears from Doctors McIntosh and Twyman, and from several American clergymen, while Rev. Mahan is able to assure us that it is one of the most solemn things he has ever read. The Vatican yielded the next set of documents. First among them stand some short notes of that celebrated writer Valleius Paterculus, whose work, entitled *Historia Romania*, had been "*thought to be extinct*". Next we have the report of Pilate. I cannot resist giving two short quotations. Pilate's wife says to him:

«« Behold, the torrent in Mount Kedron flows with blood, the statues of Cæsar are filled with gemonide, the columns of the interium having given away, and the sun is veiled in mourning like a vestal in the tomb. »»

The report ends in these terms: “*With the promises of faithfulness and good wishes to my noble Sovereign, I am your most obedient servant, Pontius Pilate.*”

Two apologetic speeches follow. One is the defence of Herod Antipater, the other that of Herod Antipas. And the volume concludes with seven very long letters of Hillel the Third on the Providence of God, which were sent to Rev. Mahan after his return home, and appear to have been compiled out of some reasonably sensible textbook of divinity.

On looking back at the report of Caiaphas I find one sentence (not a typical one, it is fair to say) which cries aloud for preservation in these columns:

«« But when he yielded up the ghost, he proved to all that he was hypostatical (that is, a human body) and the ‘lodi curios’ had come from the iclandic covenant, and his trinitatis unitas’ was all a sham. »» (38)

The parties who wrote this were, one would say, evidently of foreign birth and education. Expressions such as ‘lodi curios’ and ‘iclandic’ take their place with the Archko of the title, the ‘intra secus’ of the title page, and the ‘gemonide’ of Cæsar’s statues.

To speak seriously, here is a book of about 250 pages, nicely printed, neatly bound, provided with a frontispiece representing the interiors of the Vatican library and of the mosque of the Hagia Sophia, one, moreover, which has found a publisher in America and an agent in England, and it contains, from one end to the other, nothing but the most intolerable, ignorant, stupid, tumid bosh. What is the meaning of it? Why was it written? The person calling himself Reverend Mahan is not mad, so far as I can see. The book is too coherent and too dull to make that hypothesis a probable one. It is just possible that Drs. McIntosh of Scotland and Twyman of England, both ‘of the Antiquarian Lodge, Genoa, Italy’ may in some way, not easy to imagine, have practised upon his frank intelligence. Whether that is so or not, it is clear that an engaging simplicity is a prominent feature in the character of Mahan.

### ***15 – Other forgeries***

The ArchkoVolume is no isolated phenomenon in this century. In 1829 - and probably in other years - there appeared at Bristol a réchauffé of the history of the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Judges, under the name of the Book of Jasher. (39) It lies before me as I write. Prefaced by a testimonial signed Wickliffe, and by an account of the discovery of the book at Gazna in Persia from the pen of Alcuin, and furnished with short notes by Hur, Othniel, Phinehas, and the editor, it is, in spite of all, a poor, dull piece of work.

Not very far removed from Jasher in date, and resembling it a good deal in form, is the famous Book of Mormon (the holy book of the Mormon-sect established in Salt Lake City, Utah). It is to be presumed that the community of Utah are able to read it with satisfaction, but to the non-Mormonic mind, it is the very weakest dilution of the historical books of the Old Testament.

The stately quarto of Constantine Simonides, published in 1861, and full of ‘facsimiles’, at first sight imposing, but rapidly crumbling away under examination, is a much more remarkable achievement. It imposed for a time upon men who had pretensions to be called learned. (40) What was attempted in it was not the floating of long spurious histories, but the production of early fragments of the Gospels and epistles containing remarkable readings, and of inscriptions and colophons serving to confirm the apostolic origin of the New Testament books. There are quotations from Hegesippus, part of a record of

Christian chronology from an inscribed stone at Thyatira, fragments of a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel written in the year 48, and, in a footnote, a set of directions in Greek for taking photographs by a writer of the fifth century! There is no lack of enterprise about Simonides.

Most recent among the forgers of this type was the man who called himself Notovich, and who produced a Buddhist life of our Lord from the recesses of a Tibetan monastery. But his book is too recent and too widely known to make any detailed description of it necessary. (41)

It is a curious trade, this of writing apocryphal books. One that can only thrive in a 'milieu' where the critical faculty is not developed. This age, unluckily for the trade, is nothing if not critical. People will be asking: "*Where is the manuscript? What was it like?*" Simonides was ready enough with his answer to the inquirers of this class. 'Fac-similes' and originals were always forthcoming. Rev. Mahan is rather vaguer. The Vatican MSS (ancient ManuscriptS) he used were 'scrolls', and those at the Hagia Sophia were like narrow strips of carpet around windlasses. It would be interesting to know to which collection the Vatican MSS belonged. Were they Queen Christina's, or Palatine, or Ottonian – or what?

It is difficult to say whether more of indignation or of amusement results from the study of the ArchkoVolume. Its prosperous appearance seems to indicate that in certain circles it has met with some little success. That any measure of success at all is far beyond its deserts, this article has tried to show. There is no doubt whatever that it's an extremely bad book.

---

**From The Guardian Church Newspaper - March 14, 1900:**

P. S. The ArchkoVolume is also mentioned by M. R. James in his "The Apocryphal New Testament" (1924), where on page 90 he calls it "*a ridiculous and disgusting American book*", and in the introduction to his "The Lost Apocrypha of the Old Testament" he typifies as "*an astounding work*".

---



**Montague Rhodes James**

## Notes (by Hubert Luns)

(34) The Acta Pilati from Rev. Mahan are not to be confused with the ancient script “Acts of Pilate” or “The Gospel of Nicodemus”, which were circulated beforehand.

### Persian daric

(35) The daric is a gold coin of very high gold content. It was introduced by the Persian King Darius I around 500 BC. Its use ended with Alexander the Great’s invasion about one and a half centuries later. The coin is mentioned several times in the Old Testament. The ancient Greeks believed that the coin’s name was derived from the name Darius, but instead it appears to be a Persian word meaning gold.

(36) In the quote on the balie suphots I exchanged ‘Ekaba’ and ‘Ben Gorion’, as it appears from the context that this should be the case, which again shows the inaccuracy of Rev. Mahan’s writing.

(37) It is the Clementine Homilies or Homilies of Clement, not Homilies of Clementine.

### A corruption of the text

(38) The report of Caiaphas concerning the execution of Jesus reads: “*But when he yielded up the ghost, he proved to all that he was hypostatical (that is, a human body) and the ‘lodi curios’ had come from the iclandic covenant, and his ‘trinitatis unitas’ was all a sham.*” This was translated in Istanbul in 1883. In 1900 M. R. James jokes about it. Why? Had he forgotten that the first practical typewriter only came on the market in 1873? A few years later, improvements gave the machine market appeal and from then on sales in the US took off. Yet it was in 1886 that the typewriter ribbon was introduced. The transcript of Pilate’s Report was in all likelihood handwritten and a corruption of the text could have easily happened. I propose the following correction:

«« But when he yielded up the ghost, he proved to all that he was hypostatical (that is, a human body), and the ludicrousness of the iconoclastic covenant showed how his ‘unity with the Trinity’ was all a sham. »»

Remark: Already before the Christian age, the term hypostasis was known. Hypostatical (I wonder what the Hebrew is) generally denotes an actual, concrete existence, in contrast with some abstract category. Here hypostatical could be rendered as “made of material substance”. Iconoclastic covenant can be interpreted as a covenant of images or idols. The text has now become intelligible.

### The book of Jasher

(39) The Talmud identifies the Book of Jasher with the writings of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, known as the upright. Sefer Ha-yashar literally means Book of the Upright. Jasher is twice mentioned: in Joshua 10:13 and II Samuel 1:18. Several works with this title were produced in the past centuries for various reasons. The volume referred to is a forgery by Jacob Ilive, dating from 1751 and enlarged for the 1829 edition. Ilive’s “Book of Jasher” was clearly exposed as a fraud, but it gained popularity when reprinted by the Rosicrucians in 1934.

### Who was Simonides?

(40) Constantine Simonides was a controversial figure, specialised in the trade of ancient manuscripts, some of which he tinkered with to increase their value. Authentic materials from famous Liverpool antiquarian Joseph Mayer were given faked additions, such as presumed authentic portions of the Gospel of Matthew! Among other Simonides fakes was the correspondence to ‘prove’ his claim of the ‘forgery’ of the “Codex Sinaiticus”, which was no forgery but an authentic document acquired by the British Museum in 1933 for the substantial sum of £ 100,000.

### The unknown life of Jesus Christ

(41) After the Temple incident when Jesus was twelve years old, the family went into hiding in India, Persia, Egypt, Greece and England. This was during the so-called ‘missing years’ of Jesus because the Gospels tell nothing about his life in period between the

age of 12 and 30 years old, and there are only a few legends going around about it. It was Nicolas Notovitch, a Russian war correspondent, who during his travels was the first to discover evidence of Jesus' whereabouts in India, which he published in: "La vie incon nue de Jésus Christ" (The unknown life of Jesus Christ), Paris # 1894. The book contains the text of a first century manuscript: "Life of Issa, best of the Sons of Men", which he found in the Hemis Buddhist Monastery in Lhasa (Tibet), while, in 1887, he was recovering from a broken leg. According to the text, Issa (or Jesus) spent some time in India before travelling to Persia. Notovitch offered a solution to the mystery of Jesus' missing years and he was by no means the sole author to propose a sojourn in the East. His book received much publicity and criticism when it appeared and it fell into obscurity until a re-edition in 1926 as the "Life of Issa" rekindled interest as it was once again positioned as a major discovery. Nowadays it is easy to find, as several editions exist.

Edgar Goodspeed wrote a crushing verdict on the discovery by Nicolas Notovitch. Having read the book, I disagree. It is difficult, if not impossible, to prove that Notovitch's discovery was genuine, but that does not prove it to be a fraud. To me it has the patina of an ancient document. Well, that is a subjective assessment, but so is that of Goodspeed. Goodspeed's main argument rests on a declaration by "*the great Orientalist Friedrich Max Müller*". That does not impress me, for Max Müller has been proven to be an Euro-centric fraud. His debunked Aryan invasion theory and his poor scholarship are now globally recognized.

Of particular interest is that the finding was confirmed by Swami Abhedananda (born Kaliprasad Chandra), a direct disciple of Rama Krishna. In 1922 he left the US for a tour in India for the express purpose of verifying Notovitch's story. He found the evidence that fully supports Notovitch's claims, when Abhedananda stayed at the Hemis Monastery. He was shown the Tibetan text and had at least part of it translated. He believed it to be authentic. They told that the original was kept in a monastery at Marbour near Lhasa. He wrote a detailed account of his travels in "Kashmir O Tibbate", which from Bengali was translated into English in 1987 and is currently available as "Journey into Kashmir and Tibet".

Then there is Professor Nicholas Roerich who, with an interval, toured Asia in the period of 1924-28. Nicholas, his wife Helena and son George, were the leaders of the expedition to the mountains of India. George had studied Persian, Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan, and so he was the perfect guide. The legends about Jesus' sejour in India were widespread; Roerich encountered them in Kashmir, Ladakh, Mongolia, Sinkiang, and other places, and he discovered that "*the lamas comprehend the significance of these legends*". Whatever the source and version, he noted that "*all agree on one point, that during the time of his absence, Christ stayed in India and Asia*". The expedition consisted of 9 Europeans, 36 natives, using 102 camels, yaks, horses, and mules. They were accompanied through Sikkim by Roerich's other son, Sviatoslav, and a well-known scholar of Tibetan literature, Lama Lobzang Mingyur Dorje. Roerich died in India in 1947. He was world-famous and trice nominated to the longlist for the Nobel Peace Prize. He is therefore trustworthy. He wrote a diary of his travels in India, called "Altai-Himalaya", where he describes his visit to Lamayuru-Hemis in 1925. I now quote from his book:

«« If behind the present idol of Buddha it is difficult to perceive the lofty image of Buddha the Teacher, then it is still more unexpected to hear in Tibetan mountains beautiful words about Jesus. Yet Buddhists preserve the teachings of Jesus, and lamas pay reverence to Jesus who passed and taught here. (...) Many remember the lines from the book of Notovitch, but it is still more wonderful to discover, on this site, in several variants, the same version of the legend of Issa. The local people know nothing of any published book but they know the legend and with deep reverence they speak of Issa. (...) It is related that he passed his time in several ancient cities of India such as Benares. All loved him because Issa dwelt in peace with Vaishas and Shudras whom he instructed and helped. (...) Afterward, Issa went into Nepal and into the Himalaya mountains. (...) Finally Jesus reached a mountain pass and in the chief city of Ladak, Leh, he was joyously accepted by monks and people of the lower class. And Jesus taught in the monasteries and in the bazaars [market places]; wherever the simple people gathered, there he



taught. (...) On approaching the Hemis Monastery one already feels the strange atmosphere of darkness and dejection. The stupas have strange fearful images – ugly faces. Dark banners. Black ravens fly above and black dogs are gnawing at bones. And the canyon tightly incloses itself. Of course, the temple and the houses are all huddled together. And the objects of service are heaped together in dark corners like pillaged loot. The lamas are half-literate. Our guide laughs: “*Hemis, a big name, but a little monastery.*” Of course, small, not according to size, but to inner meaning. (...) It is an old monastery founded by a great lama who left a book about Shambhala and these manuscripts are lying down below, out of sight, probably feeding the mice.

Regarding the legends of Jesus, first there was a complete denial. To our amazement denial first comes from the circle of missionaries. Then slowly, little by little, creep in fragmentary, reticent details, difficult to obtain. Finally it appears that the old people in Ladak have heard and know about the legends. Such legends about Jesus and the Book of Shambhala lie in the ‘darkest’ place. And the figure of the lama – the compiler of the book of Shambhala – stands like an idol in some sort of fantastic headgear. And how many other relics have perished in dusty corners? – for the Tantrik-lamas have no interest in them. It was necessary to see this other side of Buddhism. »»

What strikes me about the accounts of Notovitch, Abhedananda and Roerich is that they advance no claim that Christ’s wisdom was based on an initiation that He would have received in the East, which is bon ton in gnostic circles. An initiation in the East would make Jesus one of the many gurus. In those three accounts (based on more or less the same source), Christ condemns the paganism of the Eastern religions, but praises the common man, who by ignorance and poor education does not know better. In a way, Christ tilled the field for the Apostle Thomas, who went to India after Christ’s Resurrection. (According to traditional accounts of the “Saint Thomas Christians” of India, the Apostle Thomas landed in Muziris (Cranganore) on the Kerala coast in the year 52 and was martyred in Mylapore, near Madras twenty years later.)

What is more, Christianity has no explanation for Christ’s ‘missing years’. Remarkably the “Book of Truth” by Mary Divine Mercy tells the following in her message of January 4, 2014, given to her by the Virgin Mary, Mother of Salvation:

«« The moment my Son was found at the age of twelve years preaching in the Temple, we took Him into hiding [because Jesus’ wisdom had created much opposition from the learned men – sounds familiar, doesn’t it?]. Joseph’s family were involved in smuggling us out and for many years we travelled. We first went to Judeah [after we had come back from Egypt], and then [after the Temple incident] my Son was taken to India, Persia, Egypt, Greece and England [there are detailed accounts of his visit to England]. Everywhere we went, my Son’s Presence created many miracles, although He never presented himself publicly as the Messiah. He was well looked after and we saw much of Him. We lived in peace, love and harmony, and if only for my spouse, Joseph, we would have had nowhere to go to protect my Son until his public Mission began. »»

• • •

## APPENDIX 1

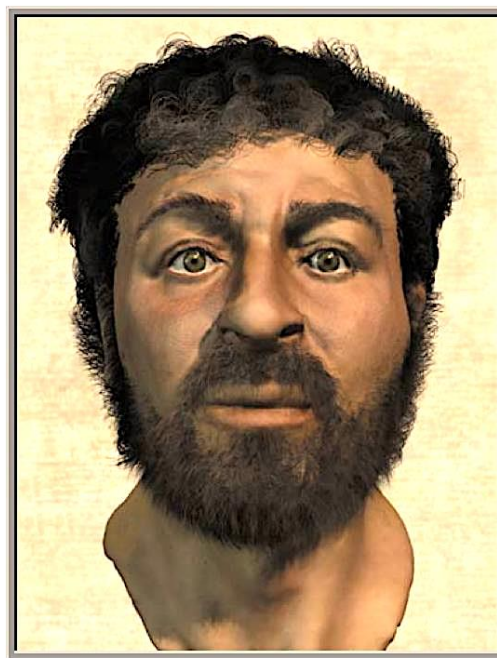
# ‘Real Face of Jesus’ a Sham !

**Advances in forensic science reveal the most famous face in history**

**By MIKE FILLON, *Popular Mechanics*, 7 December 2002.**

## What did Jesus look like?

From the first time Christian children settle into Sunday school classrooms, an image of Jesus Christ is etched into their minds. In North America he is most often depicted as being taller than his disciples, lean, with long, flowing, light brown hair, fair skin and light-colored eyes. Familiar though this image may be, it is inherently flawed. A person with these features and physical bearing would have looked very different from everyone else in the region where Jesus lived and ministered. Surely the authors of the Bible would have mentioned so stark a contrast. On the contrary, according to the Gospel of Matthew, when Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane before the Crucifixion, Judas Iscariot had to indicate to the soldiers whom Jesus was because they could not tell him apart from his disciples.



*From BBC Photo Library*

Further clouding the question of what Jesus looked like is the simple fact that nowhere in the New Testament is Jesus described, nor have any drawings of him ever been uncovered. There is the additional problem of having neither a skeleton nor other bodily remains to probe for DNA. In the absence of evidence, our images of Jesus have been left to the imagination of artists. The influences of the artists' cultures and traditions can be profound, observes Carlos F. Cardoza-Orlandi, associate professor of world Christianity at Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta. *"While Western imagery is dominant, in other parts of the world he is often shown as black, Arab or Hispanic."* And so the fundamental question remains: What did Jesus look like?

An answer has emerged from an exciting new field of science: forensic anthropology. Using methods similar to those police have developed to solve crimes, British scientists, assisted by Israeli archeologists [who were eager to do so], have re-created what they believe is the most accurate image [above] of the most famous face in human history.

## The Body As Evidence

An outgrowth of physical anthropology, forensic anthropology uses cultural and archeological data as well as the physical and biological sciences to study different groups of people, explains A. Midori Albert, a professor who teaches forensic anthropology at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Experts in this highly specialized field require a working knowledge of genetics, and human growth and development. In their

research they also draw from the fields of primatology, paleoanthropology [the study of primate and human evolution] and human osteology [the study of the skeleton]. Even seemingly distant fields like nutrition, dentistry and climate adaptation play a role in this type of investigation.

While forensic anthropology is usually used to solve crimes, Richard Neave, a medical artist retired from The University of Manchester in England, realized it also could shed light on the appearance of Jesus. The co-author of *Making Faces: "Using Forensic and archaeological evidence, Neave had ventured in controversial areas before. Over the past two decades, he had reconstructed dozens of famous faces, including Philip II of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great, and King Midas of Phrygia. If anyone could create an accurate portrait of Jesus, it would be Neave."*

## Reconstructing Jesus

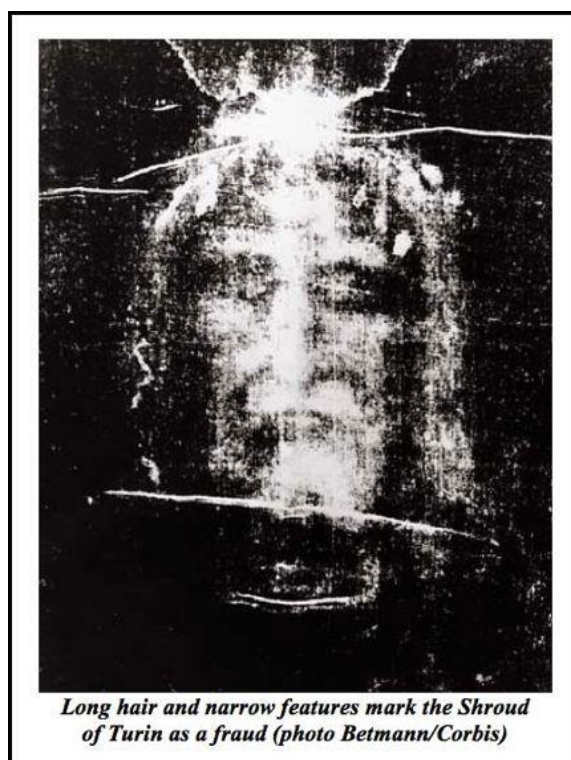
Matthew's description of the events in Gethsemane offers an obvious clue to the face of Jesus. It is clear that his features were typical of Galilean Semites of his era. And so the first step for Neave and his research team was to acquire skulls from near Jerusalem, the region where Jesus lived and preached. Semite skulls of this type had previously been found by Israeli archeology experts, who shared them with Neave.

With three well-preserved specimens from the time of Jesus in hand, Neave used computerized tomography to create X-ray 'slices' of the skulls, thus revealing minute details about each one's structure. Special computer programs then evaluated reams of information about known measurements of the thickness of soft tissue at key areas on human faces. This made it possible to re-create the muscles and skin overlying a representative Semite skull.

The entire process was accomplished using software that verified the results with anthropological data. From this data, the researchers built a digital 3D reconstruction of the face. Next, they created a cast of the skull. Layers of clay matching the thickness of facial tissues specified by the computer program were then applied, along with simulated skin. The nose, lips and eyelids were then modeled to follow the shape determined by the underlying muscles.

## A Matter of Style

Two key factors could not be determined from the skull - Jesus's hair and coloration. To fill in these parts of the picture, Neave's team turned to drawings found at various



**This is a scandalous comment. It is just the opposite. The Shroud is real and the work of Neave is a fraud.**

archeological sites, dated to the first century. Drawn before the Bible was compiled, they held crucial clues that enabled the researchers to determine that Jesus had dark rather than light-colored eyes. They also pointed out that in keeping with Jewish tradition, he was bearded as well.

It was the Bible, however, that resolved the question of the length of Jesus's hair. While most religious artists have put long hair on Christ, most Biblical scholars believe that it was probably short with tight curls. This assumption, however, contradicted what many believe to be the most authentic depiction: the face seen in the image on the famous – some say infamous – Shroud of Turin. The shroud is believed by many to be the cloth in which Jesus's body was wrapped after his death. Although there is a difference of opinion as to whether the shroud is genuine, it clearly depicts a figure with long hair. Those who criticize the shroud's legitimacy point to 1 Corinthians, one of the many New Testament books the apostle Paul is credited with writing. In one chapter he mentions having seen Jesus - then later describes long hair on a man as disgraceful. Would Paul have written: *"If a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him"* [he meant, as long as women], if Jesus Christ had had long hair? For Neave and his team this settled the issue. Jesus, as drawings from the first century depict, would have had short hair, appropriate to men of the time.

The historic record also resolved the issue of Jesus's height. From an analysis of skeletal remains, archeologists had firmly established that the average build of a Semite male at the time of Jesus was 5 ft. 1 in., with an average weight of about 110 pounds. Since Jesus worked outdoors as a carpenter until he was about 30 years old, it is reasonable to assume he was more muscular and physically fit than westernized portraits suggest. His face was probably weather beaten, which would have made him appear older, as well.

### **An Accurate Portrait**

For those accustomed to traditional Sunday school portraits of Jesus, the sculpture of the dark and swarthy Middle Eastern man that emerges from Neave's laboratory is [an affront to] their faith. Charles D. Hackett, director of Episcopal studies at the Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, makes the [preposterous] remark that *"The fact that he probably looked a great deal more like a darker-skinned Semite than westerners are used to seeing him pictured is a reminder of his universality"*, and he adds [insult to injury when he says]: *"And [it is] a reminder of our tendency to sinfully appropriate him in the service of our cultural values."*

Neave emphasizes that his re-creation is simply that of an adult man who lived in the same place and at the same time as Jesus. As might well be expected, not everyone agrees. Forensic depictions are not an exact science, cautions Alison Galloway, professor of anthropology at the University of California in Santa Cruz. The details in a face follow the soft tissue above the muscle, and it is here where forensic artists differ widely in technique. Galloway points out that some artists pay more attention to the subtle differences in such details as the distance between the bottom of the nose and the mouth. And the most recognizable features of the face – the folds of the eyes, structure of the nose and shape of the mouth – are left to the artist. *"In some cases the resemblance between the reconstruction and the actual individual can be uncanny"*, says Galloway. *"But in others there may be more resemblance with the other work of the same artist."* Despite this reservation, she reaches one conclusion that seems to be inescapable [to them – how could it be otherwise – who do not believe in Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah]. And thus she says: *"This is probably a lot closer to the truth than the work of many great masters."* [What a dare to say that!]

---

## Reader Comments

### 70. RE: Real Face Of Jesus: December 2002 Cover Story

Is there anything wrong with the image on the Shroud of Turin? Personally, I'll 'buy' that image. I really think THAT image is the real thing, not a hoax.... JUST my opinion.

### 61. RE: Real Face Of Jesus: December 2002 Cover Story

This is no way a real picture of our Lord Jesus. There is no peace in this face wither any shine or grace. It is a way to make fun of Lord Jesus. I am sure the person who has made this is not a believer.

### 42. RE: Real Face Of Jesus: December 2002 Cover Story

First off. I'm having problems how anthropological material was found for them to generate this picture. I'm just not understanding. Next, to the person who said that they don't believe Jesus existed. That's manure man. He obviously existed. There are more historical records of his birth, life, and Crucifixion than most historical figures of all time. He was recorded by well-regarded historians. I also know that the Bible says that He had no beauty for which man to desire. He may not have had a physical attractiveness, but He'll be the most beautiful sight I ever see when I finally see Him. I'm not entirely convinced that the Shroud of Turin is not a God-made 'photograph' of Christ. I believe Jesus would resemble a Jew, definitely. How do you explain the image on the Shroud, if not authentic? I think this picture could be very close, I'm still thinking He had long hair, if only for the fact that He was too busy to cut it, lol. Just a joke. Anyway, I think I'll conclude.

### 12. RE: Real Face Of Jesus: December 2002 Cover Story

By Reverend Albert Kim Dreisbach, a Biblical scholar, theologian and Shroud historian <http://www.shroud.com/faq.htm#7>

I'm afraid that your 'Jewish authority' is mistaken with regard to the length of hair for Jewish males in the first century of our Christian era. According to R. C. Dentan in an article written for The Interpreter's Bible Dictionary under "HAIR":

«« The hair's capacity for constant growth has always made it seem an important seat of life and, therefore, religiously significant. The most notable example of this in the Bible is in the case of the NAZIRITE VOW (Num. 6:12-1; Judg. 13:5; 16:17; 1 Sam. 1:11), one aspect of which was to allow the hair to grow long so that it might be presented to God as an offering (Num. 6: 18; Acts 18:18; 21:23-24). Samson's hair, in the final form of the story (Judg. 13:5), appears to have been left long in fulfillment of such a vow, although originally it had a more primitive significance as the repository of his strength (Judg. 16:19, 22). The shaving of the head in mourning (Job 1:20; Isa. 15:2; Jer. 41:5; 47:5; 48:37; Ezek. 7:18) and the offering of the hair to the dead were part of ancient religious practice, but forbidden to the Hebrews (Deut. 14: 1). Indeed, the complete shaving of the head was forbidden to them for any purpose (Lev. 19:27; cf. Jer. 9:26; Ezek. 44:20). In the OT, long hair on men was greatly admired (II Sam. 14:25-26; cf. Song of S. 5:2, 11), but in the NT it is frowned upon as contrary to nature (1 Cor. 11:14). Although women wore their hair long (1 Cor. 11:15), the Biblical writers deplore the excessive ornamentation of it (Isa. 3:24; 1 Pet. 3:3). The hair is a symbol of the fine (Judg. 20:16), the small (Luke 21:18), and the numerous (Mt. 10:30). »»

When it comes to the passage from 1 Cor. 11:14-15, one must remember that it was written at least 20 years after the death of Jesus. Closer study will reveal that it is simply Paul's personal opinion and certainly not a regulation, which would have applied to Jesus during his lifetime. Once again a quote from "The Interpreter's Bible Volume" devoted to 1 Corinthians may prove useful in this case:

«« [Today it would be] considered folly to argue, as Paul implies, that men are likely to be less spiritually sensitive or alert because their hair is worn long, or that a woman loses spiritual and social standing because her hair is short, or because she appears in public with her head uncovered. The argument would have been unconvincing, in some respects at least, even in Paul's day; for Greek heroes often wore long hair, and many ancient philosophers, as well as their modern



counterparts, followed the same practice. Paul is entitled to his opinion and to his adherence to social custom. He is not entitled to make his personal opinion, or the prevalent social customs of his time, the basis of a moral law or of a categorical imperative of the Kantian order. What is permanent in all this discussion is that the conduct of church affairs, and public worship in particular, should be marked by reverence and order, by dignity and decency. Nothing should be permitted that attracts undue attention to itself. A careful study of the Shroud of Turin will reveal that not only did this man have shoulder length hair and a beard, but if you study the dorsal or back side you can also detect an unplaited ponytail – a hairstyle favored by young men at that time. Logic alone would seem to indicate that one wouldn't have enough hair for a ponytail unless at least that hair on the back of the head was long. »»

- Note: My interpretation of the statement by St Paul is that in the larger context where he compares man and woman, he means that a man should not wear his hair as long as women do. Jesus had shoulder-length hair, indeed, but he did not have it beyond as in those days many women had, who had their hair until their breasts or even longer. Quite evidently, long and short are relative concepts.

...



# PILATE'S COURT, AND THE ARCHKO-VOLUME

By

EDGAR J. GOODSPEED

TAKEN FROM THE BOOK: STRANGE NEW GOSPELS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS - 1931

**A later edition was called: "Modern Apocrypha, Famous Biblical Hoaxes"**

The Beacon Press, Boston - 1956

---

Edgar Johnson Goodspeed (1871-1962) was a New Testament scholar. He taught for many years at the University of Chicago, whose collection of New Testament manuscripts he enriched by his searches. The collection is now named in his honor. He is widely remembered for his translation: "The New Testament: an American Translation". (42) He also wrote important introductions to Biblical literature for the lay reader.

---

## PREFACE TO THE BOOK – by EDGAR J. GOODSPEED

For many years I have been engaged in the study of early Christian literature, a field in which the genuineness of every document must be rigorously investigated. In the course of this study, there have come to my attention, from time to time, from obscure private sources, writings claiming to be genuine documents of Christian antiquity. It was inevitable that I should instinctively test these stray pieces by the same tests that we constantly apply to all other documents supposedly ancient. In fact anyone familiar with any considerable number of the really ancient works of Christian literature cannot read these pieces without incidentally testing them in this way as he reads.

I did not seek these curious pieces out. They were brought to me by students and others who had come across them and wished information about them. As time went on I found myself possessed of a number of them larger than I, or I suppose anyone else, dreamed existed, so large a number in fact that it occurred to me that a useful service might be rendered by describing them together, and pointing out their failure to meet the simple and familiar tests of antiquity and genuineness.

They form a strange netful, dredged up from obscure depths mostly beyond the ken of educated people, and of little interest to them. Yet the mere collecting and describing of them may be useful, for while many people are acquainted with one or another of them, no one seems to know them all. And since there are undoubtedly others unknown to me, to list and test these eight may prepare the way for a fuller collection later.

Few of them have been discussed by scholars. They have for the most part been judged unworthy of serious consideration. And in one sense they are. But when a book is declared, as one of these has been, to be "*next in importance to the Bible*", and increasing numbers of people are being misled by it, it is time to put our fastidiousness aside and state the facts. Moreover the very bulk and number of them merit some attention, and since in the study of ancient literature we constantly seek to distinguish the genuine from the spurious, what is here gathered may at least serve as a footnote to the serious study of early Christian literature.

---

# PILATE'S COURT AND THE ARCHKO-VOLUME

by Edgar Johnson Goodspeed (1931)

---

## *16 – An overview*

In 1879, the Reverend William Dennes Mahan, a Cumberland Presbyterian minister of Boonville, Missouri, published a pamphlet of thirty-two pages [not 32 but 33], entitled “A Correct Transcript of Pilate’s Court”. It consisted chiefly of an official report of the trial and death of Jesus, made directly to the Emperor Tiberius, by Pilate, as governor of Judeah. Pilate describes his arrival in Jerusalem as governor, the arrogance with which the Jewish leaders treated his advances, his encounter with Jesus, and the impression Jesus’ words made upon him. Pilate invites Jesus to an interview, warns him of his danger from the Jews, and urges him to be more moderate in his condemnation of them, but Jesus is unmoved. Herod calls upon Pilate, and expresses his interest in Jesus. At the Passover, an insurrection against Pilate’s authority broke out, Jesus was seized by the rabble, brought before the High Priest, and condemned to death. Caiaphas turned him over to Pilate for sentence and execution. As he was a Galilean, Pilate sent him to Herod, who again threw the responsibility upon Pilate. Pilate’s wife, a Gaul of clairvoyant powers, warned him against harming Jesus. But he was carried away by the clamor of the mob, and unable with the few soldiers then at his command to assert his authority against the people, he washed his hands in disapproval, and allowed Jesus to be hurried away to Crucifixion. Fearful portents and unnatural darkness attended his death. Joseph of Arimathea begged for his body, and placed it in a tomb. A few days later this was found empty, and the disciples declared that he was risen. Just as Pilate was finishing his report of the case to the Emperor, the night following “*the fatal catastrophe*”, he heard of the long-desired reinforcements, two thousand legionaries, marching to his relief - just too late to enable him to save Jesus. [The arrival of reinforcements, which contradicts Pilate’s earlier remark, was omitted in the *Acta Pilati*, published five years later.]

Rev. Mahan accompanied this “Report” with a circumstantial account of how he came to know of the work and to become possessed of it. He stated that while he was living in De Witt, Missouri, in 1856, a German scholar named Henry C. Whydaman was icebound there and spent several days at his house. In the course of their conversations Mr. Whydaman told him of the existence of these “Acts of Pilate” in the Vatican Library, and thought a transcript of them could be obtained. Rev. Mahan became interested in the matter, and afterward, on September 22, 1856, he wrote Mr. Whydaman for a copy of the text. Mr. Whydaman had returned to Germany, but answered from Westphalia, promising to do what he could to secure one. Some months later he wrote that Father Peter Freelinhusen, the chief guardian of the Vatican, would provide a copy of the Latin text for thirty-five darics, or sixty-two dollars and forty-two cents. Rev. Mahan sent him a check on the Foreign Exchange Bank of New York, and on April 26, 1859, Mr. Whydaman’s brother-in-law, Mr. C. C. Vantberger, of New York, reported the arrival of the document, and offered to translate it for ten dollars. Eight letters in all are printed in

explanation of how the document came into Rev. Mahan's hands. The eighth is a letter from Father Freelinhusen to Mr. Whydaman certifying to the accuracy of his copy of the Latin manuscript.

Rev. Mahan does not explain what he did with the Report during the twenty years that followed. But in 1879 he did at last publish it in the modest pamphlet described above. It seems to have met with gratifying success. Mr. Frederick W. Ashley, chief assistant librarian of the Library of Congress, informs me that it was republished within a year at Shelbyville, Indiana, by the Rev. George Sluter, who accompanied it with almost a hundred pages of introduction and notes, calling it "The Acta Pilati". In 1880 William Overton Clough republished it at Indianapolis, as the "Gesta Pilati". Mr. Clough went so far as to print several passages from it in Latin, but without saying whence he obtained the Latin form, and it must be admitted that the Latin has a very modern sound.

There are obviously some grave difficulties. This earliest form of the Report, which appears in substantially identical form in the publications of Mahan, Sluter, and Clough, in 1879 and 1880, has recently been reissued in a mimeographed pamphlet [a stencil], entitled "Pilate's Court", without date or place, except that the copyright for Oregon and Washington Territory is described as owned by S. Monro Hubbard. The reference to Washington Territory seems to point to a date for this edition prior to 1889 when Washington became a state. The form differs from Mahan's earliest only in that the name of Pilate does not stand at the beginning.

### ***17 – How the Report was obtained ...and further discoveries***

I will now proceed with Rev. Mahan's document and his story of how he secured it. To begin with, the name of Henry C. Whydaman does not have a German ring. As Professor Schmiedel, the distinguished scholar from Zürich, has since pointed out, Whydaman is no German name, and Westphalia is not a place but a province. (43) No such name as Vantberger appears in the New York City directories from 1853 to 1863, and the "Foreign Exchange Bank" does not appear among New York banks of 1858. (44) The name of Father Peter Freelinhusen is unknown to the annals of the Vatican Library. The use of darics in Rome in the nineteenth century is a surprise to most of us, who know that coin best from its use in Xenophon's "Anabasis". (45) It is noteworthy that Rev. Mahan had to have the document translated for him, though it was in a language as well known as Latin. It is also noteworthy that Father Freelinhusen made no announcement of the discovery to the world of scholarship, although the extraordinary importance of it, if it was genuine, could not possibly have escaped him. The learned Mr. Whydaman, who transmitted the Latin text to America, must have been aware of its importance and even the mysterious Mr. Vantberger, of New York, should have known that the transaction left him possessed of a Latin text of extreme interest.

The misgivings raised by the story of how the Report was obtained are not relieved by the contents of the Report itself. The remark of Pilate that Herod "*then reigned in Galilee*" is a strange thing for Pilate to write to the Emperor the night after the Crucifixion (46); the Emperor must have known who was governing Galilee, and, as a matter of fact, Herod's tenure of office outlasted Pilate's. The excited words of Pilate's wife: "*The statues of Caesar are filled with gemonide, the columns of the interium have given way*", are certainly obscure. At this point, the translator, Mr. Vantberger, seems to have done his work very imperfectly. The crowd that hurries Jesus away to Crucifixion utters such cries as "*were never heard in the seditions of the panonia*". The mob "*streams out of the funeral gate leading to the Gemonica*." (47) This looks like an allusion to the

Gemonian stairs at Rome. Dionysius the Areopagite, the Athenian mentioned in the Acts, is in Jerusalem on the day of the Crucifixion. (48) The picture of Jesus in his interview with Pilate is romantic and theatrical, and the Pilate reflected in the Report is historically improbable. The whole work is a weak, crude fancy, a jumble of high-sounding but meaningless words, and hardly worth serious criticism. It is difficult to see how it could have deceived anyone.

The strangest part of the story is that it did deceive a great many people. Of course there were some who immediately declared it a fraud, but Rev. Mahan came boldly to the defense of his Report in advertisements and letters to the Boonville paper.

The success of the Report of Pilate led Rev. Mahan to further discoveries of the same kind. In 1884, five years after the appearance of the Report, he published a considerable volume containing nine such works, under the appalling title: "The Archæological and the Historical Writings of the Sanhedrim and Talmuds of the Jews, translated from the Ancient Parchments and Scrolls at Constantinople and the Vatican at Rome." A series of letters at the beginning reports visits made by Rev. Mahan first to Rome and then to Constantinople, to study original sources for the life of Jesus. He secured the aid of two great scholars, otherwise unknown: Dr. Twyman of England and Dr. McIntosh of Scotland. At the Vatican these three had no difficulty in seeing the manuscript of Pilate's Report; it was brought to them promptly the moment they called for it. They were thus able to expand Rev. Mahan's earlier form of it (which Father Freelinhusen had declared so exact) by about twelve hundred words [not 1200 but 1500], including a conclusion strongly resembling the corresponding part of the Gospel of Matthew, and ending with the inimitable words: "*I am your most obedient servant, Pontius Pilate*". The sad incident of the death from grief or fright, at the Crucifixion, of Balthasar, an aged and learned Jew of Antioch, now found a place in the Report.

With Pilate's Report thus embellished were combined reports of interviews with the shepherds, Gamaliel's interview with Joseph and Mary, Caiaphas' reports to the Sanhedrin, Eli's Story of the Magi, Herod Antipater's defense before the Senate for the slaughter of the innocents, and his defense before the Senate in regard to the execution of John the Baptist – all with the claim that they were copied and translated from ancient manuscripts in Rome or Constantinople.

## 18 – An appraisal

Like the Report of Pilate, these bristle with childish blunders. There is no such Greek philosopher and Roman legislator as Meeleesen. The supposed references to Josephus' Jewish Wars" (Senect. 15, in brut. 15, quintil. 3 and 12) simply do not exist. That Josephus in his Antiquities refers to Jesus in more than fifty places is false. The supposed references given for finding these have nothing to do with Josephus or Jesus. They are: Suet. in dom. 13, Martial 9, v. 4. The statements that Philo's works were translated into Greek by a Jewish rabbi named Simon, that he often refers to Jesus, and that he began to write about 40 AD are groundless; it was at about that time that he ceased to write. That Tacitus wrote his history of Agricola in 56 AD is of course an error: Tacitus was born in 55, and even if he had been able to write his father-in-law's biography at the age of one year, there was as yet nothing to write, for Agricola himself was only nineteen. Rev. Mahan is not aware that the Agricola was written in Latin. He says it was translated by Marcus, a Jewish rabbi: "*...and so were all the histories written in this age. They were written in the languages of those days, and the scribes of those days were most all Rabbis.*" Rev. Mahan's statement that when the followers of Mohammed took Constan-

tinople he had the fifty Bibles prepared for Constantine “*all nicely cased and deposited in the St. Sophia Mosque*” where “*they look more like rolls of narrow carpet wound around a windlass than anything else*” is baseless. Rev. Mahan thought that parchment was made out of vegetable pulp, reduced to a paste and dried in the sun, after which it was called papyrus! He gives no reference to manuscript numbers which might aid anyone to find and examine the books he claims to have found. The mention of Hilderium with Shammai and Hillel may be a reminiscence of Sheik Ilderim in “Ben-Hur” (Book 4 Ch. 13). There is no such Jewish name. As in Ben-Hur, the Wise Men are a Greek, a Hindu, and an Egyptian. This with the story of Balthasar’s death on the afternoon of the Crucifixion, which was absent from the original form of the Report had important consequences.

Rev. Mahan’s colleagues in the ministry were not slow to perceive his indebtedness, in “Eli’s Story of the Magi” published in 1884, to “Ben-Hur” published in 1880. Chief among them was the Rev. James A. Quarles, then head of the Elizabeth Aull Seminary at Lexington, Missouri, and afterward professor in Washington and Lee University. Mr. Quarles was quick to observe that whole pages of the Story of the Magi were copied verbatim from Ben-Hur. One detail that struck him with peculiar force was the mysterious word *anuman*, in this sentence: “*Egypt is satisfied with her crocodiles and anuman, holding them in equal honor.*” On comparing this with Ben-Hur, Mr. Quarles saw that Rev. Mahan in transcribing Ben-Hur had accidentally omitted a line. Ben-Hur reads (Book 4 Ch. 15): “*Egypt was satisfied with her crocodiles and Anubis. The Persians were yet devoted to Ormuzd and Ahriman, holding them in equal honor*”, which of course made everything plain.

A detailed comparison of Eli’s Story of the Magi with Ben-Hur betrays Rev. Mahan’s method and limitations. His strange reference to “*the lawn of the Khan*” – about the last thing anyone acquainted with a Syrian khan would expect – is explained by the mention in Ben-Hur of “*a lewen of the khan [a large place of shelter]*” (Book 1 Ch. 13) in the very same connection: the Wise Men are resting there late at night. The description of the Virgin is also appropriated from Ben-Hur, but her drooping lids are unhappily altered to “*dropping*” ones (Book 1 Ch. 8). The freedom and extent of Rev. Mahan’s copying of Ben-Hur are almost beyond belief. (49)

Mr. Quarles attacked the genuineness of Rev. Mahan’s discoveries in the Boonville Weekly Advertiser, with great keenness. He pointed out that Rev. Mahan was back in Boonville on November 6, 1883, although he claimed to have been discovering manuscripts in Constantinople on October 22, 1883. We may add that the best opinion today in Boonville is that Rev. Mahan did not get farther away than Rome, Illinois, a little village north of Peoria, and that his foreign letters were dispatched from that place. He was absent from Boonville less than two months in the autumn in which he claimed to have visited Rome and Constantinople, discovering and copying manuscripts.

On November 13, 1884, Mahan answered Mr. Quarles, admitting that there were misprints in the book, saying that he hoped to get Lyman Abbot to revise and enlarge it.

«« Even in its present condition (he goes on) it is paying us about twenty dollars per day. (...) You are bound to admit that the items in the book cant do any harm even if it were faulce [in error], but will cause many to read and reflect that otherwise would not. So the Eli’s Story of the Magi. The balance of good is in its favor, and as to the truth of its manuscripts I stand ready to defend them. »»

In his reply to this in the Advertiser, Mr. Quarles said, Febr. 14, 1885: “*I assume the*

*responsibility of declaring that his nine manuscripts are, one and all of them, spurious.*" Largely in consequence of his criticism, Rev. Mahan was summoned before the Lebanon presbytery in September 1885 to answer charges of falsehood and plagiarism.

### **19 – The Ben-Hur controversy**

In gathering evidence to lay before the presbytery, General Lew Wallace, who was then the American Ambassador in Turkey, was consulted. The matter is fully discussed in his autobiography, although it falls in the part of the book published by Mrs. Wallace the year after the general's death in 1905. Lew Wallace certified that no such Hebrew manuscript of the Story of the Magi as Rev. Mahan claimed to have used was known to him, and further that no one connected with the United States legation in Constantinople in October 1883 had any knowledge of a visit of Rev. Mahan to the city, nor could any of the American missionaries about Constantinople of whom Wallace had inquired: "*Recall at any time such a visitor to the capital, although few clergymen, especially those conducting such a research (...) stopped at Constantinople without making themselves known.*" General Wallace received permission from the Sultan to visit the library of the Hagia Sophia, in order to inquire for the manuscripts Rev. Mahan claimed he and Dr. McIntosh had found there. He was accompanied by Dr. Albert A. S. Long and others: ("An Autobiography" by Lew Wallace, pp. 942-45)

«« No book answering to the description given by Rev. Mahan was found, nor was there any trace of a Hebrew manuscript in whole or in part relating to the Story of the Magi. Zia Bey, the librarian, assured General Wallace that he had been in charge of the library for thirty years, and it contained no such manuscripts as Rev. Mahan professed to have seen. »»

Dr. Long wrote to General Wallace confirming all this. The librarian also certified that during his long incumbency of thirty years, but three or four parties besides that of General Wallace had visited the library, of whom he recalled the Emperor of Austria and the Empress Eugénie. It should be remembered that this investigation by General Wallace was undertaken with all the prestige of an ambassador of the United States, who was so extraordinarily popular with the Sultan that when his term as an ambassador expired, the latter invited him to enter his service. It was made within eighteen months of Rev. Mahan's supposed visit to Constantinople and the Hagia Sophia library. Yet, even then no one could be found at the legation, at the library, at the college, or among the missionaries who had heard or seen anything of Rev. Mahan or Dr. McIntosh. There is a strange irony in the fact that at the very time when Rev. Mahan was supposed to have visited Constantinople and there to have read the Story of the Magi from an ancient manuscript, the author of that story was residing there too.

In the light of this and of other evidence, Rev. Mahan was found guilty of falsehood and of plagiarism, and suspended from the ministry for one year. He left the meeting of the presbytery, promising to withdraw the book from circulation. But it was reprinted in St. Louis in 1887, in Dalton, Georgia, in 1895, and in Philadelphia by the Antiquarian Book Company in 1896. This edition had a strange sequel.

On August 1, 1898, the American minister to Turkey, James B. Angell, long president of the University of Michigan, reported to the Secretary of State that he had been asked by the Antiquarian Book Company to inquire whether the librarian at the Hagia Sophia would supply a statement that the documents described in the book as found in the library of the Hagia Sophia had been found there. Copies of the correspondence that followed have been sent me by Mr. Ashley. At the instance of Mr. Angell, the 'Turkish Minister



of Public Instruction' had taken the matter up, and on July 26, 1898, made the following report to Mr. Angell:

«« From the investigations and examinations which have been made on the inquiries contained in the personal letter of His Excellency Mr. Angell, American Minister, it has been ascertained that neither the copy of any Bible ordered by the Emperor Constantine, nor any Report of Gamaliel on a conversation with the parents of Jesus, nor any report of Caiaphas on the Crucifixion of Jesus, does exist in the Library of the Hagia Sophia nor in any other of the libraries. »» (50)

The representations of Rev. Mahan as to his discoveries in Constantinople have thus been twice investigated in that town by no less a person than the American minister, and with the same result. Nothing could be found of the manuscripts he claimed to have seen there.

A summary of this correspondence was published in the Washington Star of September 23, 1898, but the reprinting of the Archko Volume, as it had come to be called, went steadily forward. It was republished in Topeka, Kansas, as the "Archko Library" in 1904 and in Philadelphia, as "The Archko Volume" in 1905. "An Autobiography" of Lew Wallace, with its exposure of Rev. Mahan's claims, appeared in 1906, but did not affect the circulation and acceptance of the book. It made its third appearance in Philadelphia in 1913, and was reprinted in Chicago in 1923, by the De Laurence Company, which does a large mail-order business in charms, talismans, amulets, and such things as most of us associate with the Dark Ages. It has been printed more than once in Grand Rapids, Michigan, by WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, and most recently in 1929 in the face of serious protest. These are only a few of its printings.

## ***20 – Further developments and conclusion***

The original core of it all, the Report of Pilate was republished in Zion's Watch-tower [the Jehovah's Witnesses] in 1892. It has also been translated into German and published apparently with some additions at Barmen, Germany, for the "Ernste Bibelforscher" [the serious Bible student]. A second German edition in 1919 attracted the critical attention of Professor Schmiedel of Zürich, who pointed out some of its manifest weaknesses in a tract entitled "Pilatus über Jesus — Eine Fälschung aufgedeckt" [Pilate talks about Jesus — a forgery uncovered]. (51) It was recently [1931] published as a tract, under the title "Letter of Pontius Pilate to Cæsar" by the Free Tract Society of Los Angeles from whom it may be had at twenty cents per dozen. It was read over the radio from Davenport, Iowa, Sunday evenings in the summer and autumn of 1926, and the bulk of it was published in the American Weekly Magazine of December 4, 1927, with the statement that it was found in the Vatican Library in 1897.

What is the explanation of this curious story? The late seventies were the years when Colonel Robert Green Ingersoll was very much in the public eye, with his [vicious] attacks upon the Bible. In 1876 he made his famous speech before the Republican National Convention nominating James G. Blaine for the presidency. In 1879 his lecture of "Some Mistakes of Moses" was published [52,600 words]. Hundreds of men rose up to answer him, and a country preacher like Rev. Mahan may well have felt stirred to help in defending the Bible. The Book of Mormon had appeared in 1830. The Mormons came to Missouri from Ohio in 1837, and settled in Caldwell County, next to Carroll County, where Mahan afterward lived. Knowledge of them and their book may have contributed to his strange writings. He perhaps knew something of the amazing discoveries made by Tischendorf in the fifties in the libraries of the Levant. The suggestion of a letter or report to the Emperor doubtless came to him from the brief apocryphal pieces of that kind trans-

lated by Alexander Walker in the Edinburgh edition of the Ante-Nicene Library, Volume 16, which appeared in 1873: the Letter of Pontius Pilate to Tiberius, the Report of Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius, and the Acts of Pilate in the Gospel of Nicodemus. All three of these titles (Letter, Report and Acts) have, it will be observed, been applied to Rev. Mahan's document.

But the general color of his pamphlet is very different from those old fictions of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, and often suggests the wild hysterical remorse of George Croly's Wandering Jew Salathiel, a book better known in Mahan's day than now. It was probably to establish for his document a date prior to that of Walker's volume that Mahan built up the elaborate Whydaman-Freelinhusen-Vantberger correspondence with which he prefaced it, which was meant to prove that the Report had been in his possession since 1859.

At all events, in the late seventies, when attacks on the Bible were most violent, this uneducated man, fully convinced that such documents as would support his views of it must exist or have existed, saw no harm in inventing a document calculated as he supposed to confirm the statements of the New Testament as he understood it. Hardly had it appeared in print (March, 1879) when in 1880 Lew Wallace's Ben-Hur made its sensational appearance. This gave wings to Rev. Mahan's imagination, and in 1884 Pilate's Report had grown into the twelve chapters of the "Archæological and Historical Writings". He writes without taste or skill. His unrefined fancy sometimes descends to the vulgar and the indecent. His book is as Montague James calls it a "*ridiculous and disgusting volume*". Yet it has been printed and reprinted, however obscurely, in a dozen places, and actually welcomed as an aid to faith by earnest but uninformed people who should have been protected against such deception. The lesson is clear: we cannot dispense with the methods and resources of exact scholarship without exposing ourselves to pious frauds.

---

Remark: Dr. Goodspeed took over the habit by M. R. James to consistently call Reverend Mahan: 'Mr. Mahan'. Out of respect for his person this has been changed everywhere into Rev. Mahan, here, as well as in "A mare's nest" by M. R. James.

## Notes (by Hubert Luns)

### The Goodspeed Bible

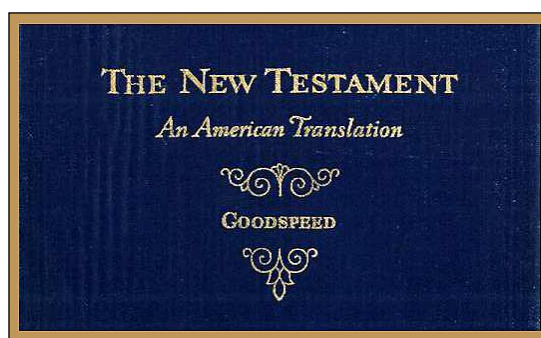
(42) Here are some parallels between the King James and Goodspeed Bible-versions:

King James: “And the angel said unto them: ‘Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. (...) Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth. Peace, good will toward men.’ ”

Dr. Goodspeed: “The angel said to them: ‘Do not be frightened, for I bring you good news of a great joy that is to be felt by all the people. (...) You will find a baby wrapped up and lying in a manger.’ Suddenly there appeared with the angel a throng of the heavenly army, praising God, saying: ‘Glory to God in heaven and on earth! Peace to the men he favors!’ ”

King James: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”

Dr. Goodspeed: “If I can speak the languages of men and even of angels, but have no love, I am only a noisy gong... .”



### The distinguished scholar from Zürich...

(43) Dr. Paul W. Schmiedel, professor of New Testament exegesis from Zürich, tells us in his contribution to the Encyclopedia Biblica, that there are only nine passages in the Gospels that we can depend upon as being the sayings of Jesus! (Gospels – Encyclopedia Biblica (Vol. II) - Macmillan Co. New York # 1901) Perhaps he was distinguished in the eyes of Dr. Goodspeed, not mine. He is one of a long line who stubbornly tried to degrade the figure of Jesus as an invention of the mind; from there the name commonly used of ‘the mythical Jesus’.

### Foreign Exchange Bank of New York could be a mistake

(44) Rev. Mahan does not write “Foreign Exchange Bank” but “Foreign Exchange Bank of New York”. This could be one of those sloppy errors. He should have written in his letter: “the check in foreign exchange is drawn on The Bank of New York, but he wrote down “*a check on the Foreign Exchange Bank of New York*”. The Bank of New York existed and was in fact the oldest bank in the country. Only after a merger in 2007 did it change its name. On this basis no conclusion can be drawn that Rev. Mahan invented the story. Dr. Goodspeed could have guessed that it was sloppiness on the part of Mahan. Being a teacher, he knew what strange mistakes pupils make. For sure, ‘pupil’ William Dennes Mahan would not have passed his exams with Professor Goodspeed.

(45) The daric was a gold coin used in the Persian empire. Its use ended with the conquests of Alexander the Great (336-323 BC).

### Herod then reigned

(46) Edgard Goodspeed states that “*the remark of Pilate that Herod ‘then reigned in Galilee’ is a strange thing for Pilate to write to the Emperor the night after the Crucifixion; the Emperor must have known who was governing Galilee, and, as a matter of fact, Herod’s tenure of office outlasted Pilate’s.*”

The Herod in question is Herod Antipas, who in the year 4 BC was appointed Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (on the East bank of the Jordan). He reigned until his death in 39 AD. So, what's the point? Of course, the Roman Emperor knew who reigned in Galilee. But such a statement of fact is not uncommon in a legal document, which the Report actually is, meant to be permanently filed in the Senatorial archives.

### **Statues filled with gemonide**

(47) In Pilate's wife's visionary dream, according to the Acts of Pilate, the statues of Cæsar were filled with 'gemonide', writes Mahan, a word derived from gemoniæ, which are the stairs leading into the river Tiber in Rome where corpses of criminals were displayed before being dragged down in the river. Méry, in his story "Pilate in Vienne", has a better translation: "The statues seemed to me soiled by the mire of the gemoniæ. 'Filled with gemoniæ' means that the rotten corpses of criminals had soiled the statues, to be seen as an evil portent of things to come. Was not Jesus made to be a criminal in order to save us? Was He not displayed as a criminal before the eyes of the whole world? The Larousse Dictionnaire (famous French dictionary) under 'gémonies' states: "Escalier qui gravissait le flanc nord-ouest du Capitole, reliant les prisons à la citadelle, et où l'on exposait les cadavres des suppliciés." (Staircase that climbed the north-western side of the Capitol, connecting the prisons to the citadel, and where the corpses of the tortured were displayed.)

### **Dionysius was in Athens**

(48) No Dr. Goodspeed! It does not state that Dionysius the Areopagite was in Jerusalem. In the next sentence, the earthquake in Egypt is discussed that happened during the Crucifixion, and more earthquakes will have happened all over a vast region, which agrees with the view that, at the time, Dionysius was staying in Athens.

### **Eli's Story of the Magi, alias Ben-Hur**

(49) As concerns having altered drooping eyes into to dropping eyes, that's incorrect, because I have the first edition of 1884 here in front of me that contains "Eli's Story of the Magi". It says: "*Her face was perfectly oval; her complexion more pale than fair; the nose was faultless; her lips slightly parted and ripe; the eyes were blue and large, shaded by drooping lids, giving to her countenance a warmth and tenderness.*" Also, I consider it childish and inappropriate to attack Rev. Mahan so severely on the fact that he changed the word lewen into lawn, because even then 'lewen' was not widely used. After some effort I did find the word in Webster's Third New International Dictionary, where lewen is described as American dialect.

That there is plagiarism related to Ben-Hur is beyond question. Mahan's plagiarism was because he fell in the trap; the manuscript had been planted there in a Hebrew translation. As Dr. Goodspeed remarks: "*The freedom and extent of Rev. Mahan's copying of Ben-Hur are almost beyond belief.*" – Yes, but commensurate with the tricks he was the victim of.

### **A trustworthy statement by the Turkish government?!**

(50) Apparently it did not occur to Edgar Goodspeed that the monumental cleansing of all foreign elements in Turkey was gathering steam in 1898 and that it was not in the interests of the Turkish government to make a public statement that in any way would promote a belief in the Crucifixion, which the Koran denies. After having finished the genocide in 1922 under general Kemal Pasha, called the "Father of Turks" (Ataturk), only 0.3% of the original non-Moslim population persisted (19% of the total population in 1889 and 33% in 1844, or 2,4 million). The Armenian holocaust was just a part, and an important part, of more than seven decades of atrocities. The Turks did a good job in attaining their objectives... The seemingly innocuous question put by the president of the University of Michigan to the Turkish minister of Public Instruction may have actually prompted the Turkish government to put the Hagia Sophia library into hiding.

(51) The tract that condemned Mahan's "Report" first appeared in 1924 in the major Swiss daily newspaper the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" (NZZ).

---

# Unanswered Questions

*about*

## ArchkoVolume's Authenticity

by Steve Keohane, USN (Ret), BibleProbe.com

---

### *21 - The purported events*

In 1879 Rev William Dennes Mahan, a Boonville Missouri minister, published a pamphlet entitled “A Correct Transcript of Pilate’s Court”. In 1884, after the apparent successful distribution and wide spread popularity of the report, Mahan issued a new volume that contained an expanded version of this report along with eleven other such works, under the title “The Archæological and the Historical Writings of the Sanhedrim and Talmuds of the Jews, translated from the Ancient Parchments and Scrolls at Constantinople and the Vatican at Rome”.

### *BibleProbe weighs in on the side of Reverend Mahan*

*Unanswered questions about ArchkoVolume’s authenticity  
until convinced by more than Dr. Goodspeed’s very questionable  
after the fact (nearly 50 yrs) investigation*

In 1887, Rev. Mahan published a book entitled “The ArchkoVolume”. It was the results of his search for first-century documents. Rev Mahan wrote that his research took him to the Vatican in Rome and to the Jewish Talmud’s in Constantinople, Turkey, and that he was accompanied and assisted by two other ‘expert’ scholars: Dr. McIntosh of Scotland and Dr. Twyman of England. He says that he was prompted to do this ever since, when in 1856, a German gentleman named H. C. Whydaman visited him and told him of his having worked at the Vatican and seen the Acta Pilati documents there.

During his 1883 trip to the Vatican, Mahan says that among many other writings he located a letter written on a papyrus scroll to Cæsar from Pontius Pilate, dated about 31 AD [since Christ was crucified in 26 AD, the letter is from that time]. What is contained in Mahan’s Archo Volume is truly awesome if the documents here turn out to have been really written by Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas, Herod and others. BibleProbe has seen nothing in these documents that would be in opposition to the teachings of the Christian Faith.

### *22 - The main argument*

Should the world dismiss this, based on an investigation into a so-called “Biblical scholar’s sham”, 48 years after Rev. Mahan made his trip to the archives in Rome and Constantinople?

Investigating Rev. Mahan’s claims in the 1930’s, the Biblical scholar Dr. Edgar J. Goodspeed, at that time professor emeritus of the University of Chicago, wrote in his book,

after having talked with people in Boonville (Mahan's home), that the reverend was absent from his home for less than two months in the autumn of 1883. This is the period Mahan claimed to be traveling to both Rome and Constantinople. Dr. Goodspeed questions whether Rev. Mahan could have traveled and researched all these documents in only about two months. In the ArchkoVolume Rev. Mahan says: *"I procured the necessary assistance and on September 21, 1883, I set sail for those foreign lands to make the investigation in person."* Apparently, people that Dr. Goodspeed interviewed think that Rev. Mahan traveled no further than Rome, Illinois. Reverend Mahan countered this when he wrote: *"I was landed at Marseilles, France, after twelve days out from New York."* Supposing Rev. Mahan was gone from Boonville about 60 days, a similar return time would have given Reverend Mahan a full month to travel to Rome & Constantinople from France and with the help of his two scholar friends to accomplish their research. Remember, in all fairness to Rev. Mahan, Goodspeed did not interview anyone in Boonville, Missouri, until half a century later and twenty five years after he died. The two months could have actually been two and a half or even three months gone. And remember, although circumstantial – there are several notarized statements from Missouri residents about what they know about Rev Mahan departing in 1883. One notarized statement from a Mr. John S. McFarland says: *"After some months Rev. Mahan returned and brought quite a lot of manuscripts with him, some of which he read to me, and which were very interesting."*

Goodspeed says that General Lew Wallace was the Ambassador to Turkey in 1883. According to Wallace, no one connected with the American legation in Constantinople had any knowledge of a visit by Mahan. Wallace also said that a man named Zia Bey, in charge of the library of the Hagia Sophia mosque, knew nothing about Mahan or of even any of the manuscripts that Mahan professed to have seen in Constantinople. (52)

It appears to Goodspeed that several pages of Mahan's "Eli's Story of the Magi", published in the ArchkoVolume, were copied from Ben-Hur. One striking detail is the use of the word anuman. The Story of the Magi reads: *"Egypt is satisfied with her crocodiles and anuman, holding them in equal honor."* Page 272 of Ben-Hur does have lines that read: *"Egypt was satisfied with her crocodiles and anubis"*. The reader should take note that The Story of the Magi no longer appears in printed copies of the ArchkoVolume. Could this be as a result to Dr. Goodspeed's investigation? (53)

There is speculation that Mahan may also have copied from a pamphlet published in Boston in 1842. This pamphlet of 12 pages was entitled: "Pontius Pilate's Account of the Condemnation of Jesus Christ, and his own Mental Sufferings". This was, so it said, extracted from an old Latin manuscript to have been *"recently found at Vienne"*. Goodspeed could not tell where this pamphlet, which he discovered in 1941, originated from.

Note: It was Per Beskow who in the 1980s claimed to have found the origin of the Boston pamphlet. He points at a story published by Joseph Méry in the Revue de Paris in 1837, called "Ponce Pilate à Vienne" (Vienne is near Lyon in France). According to Goodspeed, the Boston pamphlet came without notice of an author or publisher. Could it be this was planted in the library by the German who stayed at Mahan's home in order to confuse things? It might be so. After an extensive Internet search I could not find the Boston pamphlet. Assuming to be very similar to Méry's story, then it also appears to be much similar to "Pilate's Court, which Mahan published in 1879, but that does not prove Rev. Mahan was not duped.

Also of note is that Dr. Goodspeed said no record exists of the 'so-called' Vatican librarian, Father Freelinhusen, whom Reverend Mahan claimed to have conversed with in Rome. Dr. Goodspeed wrote that this earlier Boston pamphlet is substantially the same as the Rev. Mahan's document.



### **23 – Dr. Goodspeed might be wrong**

Authenticity remains a question because of this and the fact that the Vatican Archives are not ‘open’. The Vatican has shown a propensity to hide things it does not consider as credible or going against the grain, instead of letting the public or scientific community decide.

One will just have to believe that Rev. Mahan, a minister and Reverend of God, did not carry off such a hoax for profit. Rev. Mahan rightfully points out:

«« Now the reader must remember that there never was anything that created so much excitement in the land of Judeah as the preaching of John the Baptist and Christ. (and:) Believing that no event of such importance to the world as the death of Jesus of Nazareth could have transpired without some record being made of it by his enemies in their courts, legislations, and histories, I commenced investigating the subject. »»

It is also possible that Dr. Goodspeed is wrong, as is the case with many over-educated theology professors who, as an example, view the Bible stories as just some stories. They ignore archeology, and haven’t an inkling of what a ‘type’ is. The reader must remember that it is academia who insist on the bogus and absurd theory of evolution, even though they could never prove this theory, whilst their own senses even shriek out the ‘anthropic principle’. Many of these professors of theology even go so far as to say that there was never a Jesus of Nazareth. Many are even atheists who go out of their way to disprove things they don’t understand, ...or they are on the devil’s ‘payroll’.

### **24 - In defence of Reverend Mahan**

In defense of Rev Mahan, he himself wrote:

«« There are at least five hundred quotations made from the Sanhedrin and Talmuds of the Jews by men who have denied their existence. Now I call attention to history, and I will give the name and page, so that all can read for themselves:

First: Rabbi Akiba, a reformed Jewish priest quotes from Celsus, an enemy of the Church. He says there was a dreadful earthquake at the time Jesus was crucified, and that the mist that arose from it covered the earth for three hours. [Not to be found in contemporary literature.] He says that Jesus was the son of Mary. That he was the founder of the sect called Christians, and also that Jesus was crucified on the eve of the Passover. He gives extracts from the apostles, and never denies in a single instance, but admits their genuineness. He quotes the books and makes extracts from the names they bear. He makes particular mention of his incarnation, of his being born of a virgin, of his being worshipped by the Magi; of his flight into Egypt; of the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem. He speaks of his baptism by John, and the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and of the voice that was heard out of heaven. He speaks of the miracles that were done by Jesus, and never doubts the facts in any instance, but attributes them to the art of necromancy he had learned in Egypt. But did the reader ever hear of a thaumaturgist producing a descent of the Holy Spirit or cause voices to be heard from the heavens? Such absurdities are not spoken of except when they are urged against the Christian religion.

(...) Aretas, one of the kings of Arabia, who was a philosopher as well as a king, in speaking of the laws of nature, says that Jesus of Judeah was a philosopher above the laws of nature; that he controlled all the elements of nature with almighty power; that the winds, thunders, and lightning's obeyed him; and speaks of these facts as being so common that it would be folly to dispute them.

(...) Justin says that the several Roman governors in their respective provinces made reports of the important events that occurred in their jurisdiction, and they were spread on the senatorial dockets in Rome. We find in the same work, that he appealed to Antoninus and the Senate for clemency for the Christians, and after referring to their many virtues, and to Christ as their leader, he added: *“And that these things are so, I refer you to the records of the Senate made by Pontius Pilate and others in his day.”* »»

Of particular interest to BibleProbe in Reverend Mahan’s documents are the letters reportedly written by Pontius Pilate to the Roman Senate about Jesus. These portray Pilate as being in awe of Jesus, and one might believe by studying them that Pilate himself may have become a Christian after all he witnessed. Another haunting entry from the Archko-Volume is this marvelous saying attributed to Jesus: *“Who can measure the distance between God and the flower of the field?”* (54)

The tendency, already discernible in the canonical Gospels, to lay stress on the efforts of Pilate to acquit Christ, and thus pass as lenient a judgement as possible upon his ‘crime’, goes further in the apocryphal gospels and led in later years to the claim that he actually became a Christian. The Abyssinian Church reckons Pilate as a saint, and assigns 25 June to him and to Claudia Procla, his wife. The belief that she became a Christian goes back to the second century, and may be found in Origen (Hom., in Mt. 35). The Greek Church assigns her a feast on 27 October. Tertullian and Justin Martyr both speak of a report on the Crucifixion [not extant] sent in by Pilate to Tiberius, from which idea a large amount of apocryphal literature originated. Some of these were Christian in origin (Gospel of Nicodemus), others came from the heathen, but these have all perished. »»

-----

### Notes (by Hubert Luns)

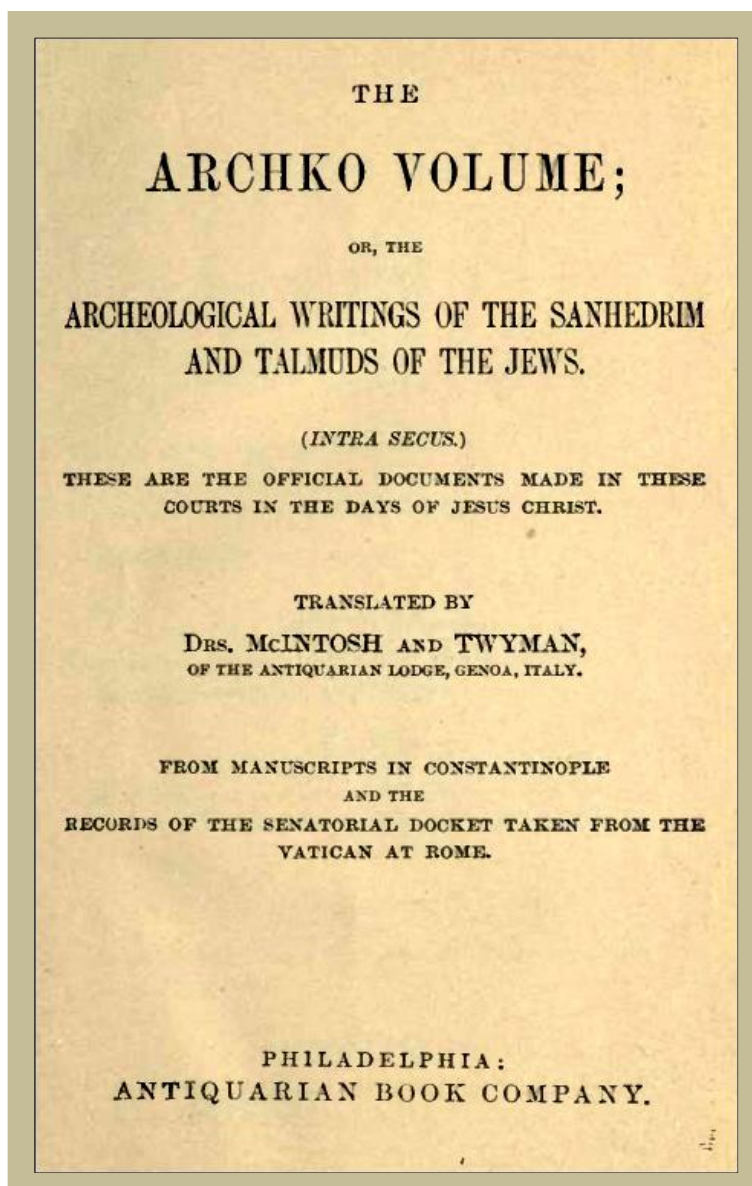
(52) It is of interest to note that there was a strange crossing of paths. Lew Wallace, who wrote “Ben-Hur – a Tale of the Christ”, was in 1880 Governor of New Mexico when he first published his book. This was not long before Rev. Mahan’s visit to Constantinople. The novel grew to be the best-selling American novel of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (it was to be the only work of fiction ever blessed by a pope). From 1881 to 1885, Lew Wallace served as an ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, thus at the time Rev. Mahan made his visit to the Hagia Sophia library, which was in October 1883.

(53) In his appraisal Edgar Goodspeed mentions that Rev. Mahan was summoned before the Lebanon presbytery in September 1885, to answer charges of falsehood and plagiarism with regard to “Ben-Hur”, of which parts appeared in “Eli’s Story of the Magi”. I would like to see the witness of Rev. Mahan before the Lebanon presbytery, because it is difficult to really judge a case and its verdict without the underlying documentation. There has been an exposé of Rev. Mahan that appeared in the Boonville weekly Advertiser of January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1885 (of which Goodspeed makes no mention), which I would be glad to receive. As a result of the investigation he was *“found guilty of literary theft and suspended from the ministry for one year”*. Evidently, the verdict also decided that all the manuscripts in the book were spurious; Mahan left the meeting of the presbytery, promising to withdraw the book from circulation, so tells Dr. Goodspeed. But apparently, Rev. Mahan felt abused and saw it as his duty to continue publishing it, not including the Story of the Magi. Steve Keohane is wrong that “Eli’s story of the Magi” was withdrawn as a result to Goodspeed’s 1931 appraisal; all editions as from 1887 are without Eli’s story. It was reprinted by Mahan in 1895, 1896, 1904 and 1905, and new editions continued after Mahan’s death in 1906. The year 1929 was the last time it was filed in the records of the Library of Congress.

(54) Unfortunately this a quote of the Pseudo-Gemaliel and is therefore no saying of Jesus, but an invention by his arch-enemies.

# THE ARCHKO-VOLUME

Amended Edition



Cover Page of the First Edition 1884

## CHAPTER I - ARCHKOVOLUME

### HOW THESE RECORDS WERE DISCOVERED.

SOME time in the year 1856, while living in De Witt, Missouri, a gentleman by the name of H. C. Whydaman became snow-bound and stopped at my house several days. He was a native of Germany, and one of the most learned men I had ever met. I found him to be freely communicative. During his stay, he told me he had spent five years in the city of Rome, and most of the time in the Vatican, where he saw a library containing five hundred and sixty thousand volumes. He told me that he had seen and read the records of Tiberius Cæsar, and in what was called the Acta Pilati – that is, the acts of Pilate – he had seen an account of the apprehension, trial, and Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. But he said it did not add much to the commonly accepted teachings of Christianity. He told me he thought a transcript could be secured. After Mr. Whydaman's departure I meditated upon what he had told me of those records, and thought that if a transcript could be obtained it would be very interesting, even if it did not add much to the present teachings of Christianity. So, after some months I set about tracing up Mr. Whydaman, as the following correspondence shows:

DeWitt, Carroll Co., Mo., Sept. 22, 1856.

MR. HENRY C. WHYDAMAN.

DEAR SIR: After you left my house last spring, I kept thinking of your telling me of reading the acts of Pilate in the Vatican, while at Rome. I want you, if you please, to get me a transcript of those records, if the cost will not be too much. Will you please open a correspondence with some of your old friends at Rome that you can rely upon, and ascertain if it can be obtained; and if so what will be the probable cost of getting it? I shall be much obliged, and will pay you for your trouble and expense.

Yours in tender regards,

W. D. MAHAN.

New York, Nov. 12, 1856.

MR. W. D. MAHAN.

DEAR SIR: Your letter as directed to H. C. Whydaman is received. I will inform you he has returned to Germany. Your letter has been forwarded.

Yours, etc.,

C. C. VANTBERGER.

March 2, 1857.

REV. W. D. MAHAN.

DEAR SIR: It is with the kindest regards I remembered your hospitality while with you in America. Be assured, anything I can do for you will afford me great pleasure. I have written to Father Freelinhusen, a monk of great learning, at Rome, who is the chief guardian of the Vatican. I have made the request in my own name, as I do not think they would be willing for such a document to go into the hands of the public. When he answers, I will write to you again.

I am, your most obedient servant,

H. C. WHYDAMAN.

Westphalia, Germany, Nov. 27, 1857.

REV. W. D. MAHAN.

DEAR SIR: Father Freelinhusen has answered my letter in regard to the transcript you want. He informs me that the writing is so fine, and being in the Latin language, as I told you, and the parchments so old and dirty, he will be obliged to use a glass to the most of it. He can only give it in the Latin, as he does not understand the English. He says he will do it for thirty-five darics, which will be in American coin sixty-two dollars and forty-four cents. If you will forward the amount, I will have the document forwarded to my brother-in-law, C. C. Vantberger. He will translate it for a trifle.

I am yours, in tender regards,

H. C. WHYDAMAN.

Chillicothe, Mo., Feb. 8, 1858.

MR. H. C. WHYDAMAN.

DEAR SIR: Thanks to you for your kindness, and be assured, if I succeed, I shall ever feel under obligations to you for your trouble. Enclosed find a check on the Foreign Exchange Bank of New York for sixty-two dollars and forty-four cents. Please have the work done, and urge Mr. Freelinhusen to have it a true copy of the original. Send it to Mr. Vantberger, and have him to translate it into English, and I will pay the charges. He has my address.

Yours, as ever,

W. D. MAHAN.

Westphalia, Germany, June 14, 1858.

REV. W. D. MAHAN.

DEAR SIR: I acknowledge your draft of \$62.44. Will apply as you request.

I am, sir,

H. C. WHYDAMAN.

MR. H. C. WHYDAMAN.

DEAR SIR: I hereby forward to you the transcript as it is on record in the Vatican in Tiberius Cæsar's Court by Pilate. I certify this to be a true copy, word for word, as it occurs there.

Yours, etc.,

PETER FREELINHUSEN.

New York, April 26, 1859.

MR. W. D. MAHAN.

DEAR SIR: I am in possession of a document from H. C. Whydaman, with instructions to translate it into English. My charge is ten dollars. I will expect an answer.

C. C. VANTBERGER.



With this correspondence I received the following document, and I must confess that, although it is not inspired, yet the words burned in my heart as the words of Christ in the hearts of his disciples, and I am satisfied from the spirit it breathes that it must be true. I am aware that though the Jews were in subjection to the Romans, yet they still held their ecclesiastical authority, and the Romans not only submitted to their decisions, but executed their decrees on their subjects. Knowing there was not such a piece of history to be found in all the world, and being deeply interested myself, as also hundreds of others to whom I have read it, I have concluded to give it to the public.

Upon getting hold of this report of Pilate I commenced to investigate this subject, and after many years of trial and the expenditure of considerable money, I found that there were many of such records still preserved at the Vatican in Rome and at Constantinople, that had been carried there by the Emperor of Rome at about the middle of the third century. I therefore procured the necessary assistance, and on September 21, 1883, I set sail for those foreign lands to make the investigation in person.

Believing that no event of such importance to the world as the death of Jesus of Nazareth could have transpired without some record being made of it by his enemies in their courts, legislations, and histories, I commenced investigating the subject. After many years of study, and after consulting various histories and corresponding with many scholars, I received the assistance of two learned men, Drs. McIntosh and Twyman, and went to the Vatican at Rome, and then to the Jewish Talmud [recorded teachings] at Constantinople. As a result I have compiled this book, which will be found to be one of the most



strange and interesting books ever read. It may appear fragmentary, but the reader must remember that it is the record of men made nearly two thousand years ago.

It was some time, in March 1856, that my mind was awakened on the subject of this book, almost incidentally, or it may be providentially, for He sometimes chooses the weakest things to confound the mighty. The reader is referred to the correspondence of H. C. Whydaman and myself, as found in this book. In God's providence sometimes very great effects are produced from very small causes. Mr. Whydaman told me he had spent five years in the Vatican at Rome, and in looking over the old manuscripts he came across the records of Pilate made to Cæsar, and in those records he saw a man named Jesus who was arrested, tried, and executed; he read it carefully and re-read it, and went back and read it again.

This was the beginning of my investigation. This book is the product of that investigation. I ask the reader to follow me patiently and see how I came to get hold of the matter contained in this book.

I wondered how it was that such historians as Philo, Tacitus, Quintilian and Josephus had told us nothing or so little about Jesus of Nazareth. I asked all the wise men and scholars I met, and they did not know. I then wrote to many scholars in Europe, and they could not tell me either. As I could find nothing very definite from the outside world, I began to have my doubts, but came to the conclusion that the question was of too much importance to allow my mind to be fixed without a thorough investigation. I went to our histories – Mosheim, Lardner, Stackhouse, and others. They gave me no satisfaction, and I thought to myself: Is it possible that the character of such men as the early Christians, and the wonderful excitement that they created in their day, could have been passed over and no records made of them? When I remembered, too, that the Roman provinces in that day were prolific with debaters, historians, and writers on all topics that were brought before them, and that the records of the courts in those days were more carefully preserved than they are now, and that even of the trial of Guiteau [the assassin of the 20<sup>th</sup> President of the United States], who was not half as conspicuous to the people of these United States as Jesus was to the Jewish nation, there were hundreds of records made. Considering this, I came to the conclusion that only the Almighty God could establish a cause so universally as the Christian religion was established in the hearts of the people of this world, and sceptre them so completely as the sceptre of Jesus governs this world today, when they had comparatively little or no testimony from the outside world.

I consulted our histories in this country, and one said these records were burned in the Alexandrian Library. I knew the Babylonian Talmuds were in this library, or at least most of them were, but I also knew that the Talmud of Jerusalem were not. I knew that when the

Romans conquered the Jews and destroyed their Holy City, Temple and all, all the sacred treasures were taken by the Romans and, I supposed, preserved.

Another historian says Pope Gregory IX burned all the sacred records. I found that this Roman bishop was a strong believer in Christ, as were all the Catholic Church. They follow not us, and we forbid them. Why should they burn these records? There is no Church more strongly in favor of Jesus Christ. He is their corner-stone, their foundation rock, their only hope. They have a different way to approach him. This does not destroy their Saviour. He remains the same, but they have different ways of using him as their Saviour.

Other historians said the Jews destroyed these records, although it is strange that the Jews should destroy all their sacred records at the time, to get rid of an impostor, as they believed him to be. It is more likely they would have preserved them to vindicate their actions in the future, provided they should be needed. The Jews were honest in all their dealings with Christ. They thought both he and John the Baptist were destroying their nation, and, as their nation and religion were one and the same, the course Jesus was pursuing jeopardized all their hopes, religious as well as political. This is seen clearly in the defence of Caiaphas, as set forth in this book [see his defence before the Sanhedrin in regard to his conduct with Jesus]. Hence, much of the prejudice among Protestants against the Jews is groundless. There never was a people more honest and devoted to their country and their God than the Jews. Many Protestants in this country, and some preachers among them, think that the more they denounce the Jews and Catholics, the more they serve God. The Jews were wrong in rejecting Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and so are those who reject him now; but when a man reads this book he will come to the conclusion that the Jews had a better reason for rejecting Christ than men have today, and would it be right to abuse all who refuse Christ as bad men? It is still more intolerable for the members of one denomination to abuse those of another because of not worshipping Christ as they do.

A difficulty I met in consulting scholars on this subject was the claim that the Roman monks had forged many manuscripts regarding Jesus Christ, in the Middle Ages. Now they may have forged some things to sustain their peculiar views and doctrines, something to sustain their Church, but there is nothing in this book to sustain Catholicism. If every word of it was forgotten it would add nothing to that Church more than to any other Church. Then I remembered the Vatican library was one of the most extensive in the world; it has cost millions of dollars. How did those forgers know that I or any other man would come there and pay them a few dollars to get a transcript of those records? It certainly would be a very poor speculation.

Another objection was that the manuscripts had been searched for by scholars and could not be found. So I set myself to work, and after investigating all the authors in this country, and writing to many scholars in Europe, and getting books from libraries in the old country, thus sparing no pains or expense, I could not find or even hear of a man who had ever investigated this subject. I found that Dr. Tischendorf made some investigation in these ancient manuscripts, but he was looking for the manuscripts of the Scriptures, and might have seen many such things as this book holds and never have noticed them, just from the simple fact that he was not looking for them. He was looking for something else. In the investigation of such subjects a man must have but one thing in his mind, and he must be posted beforehand to know how and where to look, for the field is too large to make his business general. I now challenge any scholar to show me the man who has made this his special business, and made the effort that I have on this particular subject. I am sure there is none.

The next great difficulty I encountered was this: Could such manuscripts exist so long? I found by investigation that Ptolemy, King of Alexandria, presented seventy books to Ezra, which he refused to place in the Holy Canon, and it came very near bringing on a bloody war. Again I found that Serenus Samnaticus, who was the teacher of M. Antonius Africanus, son of Gordianus the Great, when he died, left his library, consisting of 62,000 volumes, to his student. This was in 236 AD. I also remembered that the works of Homer were more than 500 years older than those of Christ, and that we had the laws of Shammai, Abtalian, and the works of the Hillels all before us. And if Tischendorf, in the convent of St. Catherine, could find slips and pieces of the Septuagint that were declared at Leipsic to be of the fourth century, I thought there might be a great deal more somewhere in the vast libraries in those old countries that have thousands of years the advantage of America. The literati could all tell how the manuscripts of the Church might be, and were, preserved, but the records of its enemies, even the records of courts and crowns they could not see into.

Now the reader must remember that there never was anything that created so much excitement in the land of Judeah as the preaching of John the Baptist and Christ. This will be readily understood if we take into consideration the structure of the Jewish Commonwealth. The great Sanhedrin legislated for the souls and bodies of men. That is, their religion and their politics were one and the same thing. In the capitulation made with Augustus Cæsar it was understood and agreed that the Jews were to pay a tax to the Romans, but the Romans were not to interfere with the Jewish religion. This took the executive power out of the hands of the Jews and put it into the hands of the Romans. This is the reason Jesus was sent to Pilate to be executed. The Romans had to carry out and execute the decisions of the Jewish courts on all Jewish questions. This is the reason Herod Antipas was

tried by the Roman Senate, for he had executed John the Baptist without a trial. Then we see why the Jews and Romans worked together on all questions of law. Hence, the great excitement of both nations. This is the reason why Pilate made his report to Cæsar.

Now I say, that no event that created so much excitement could take place without more or less a record being made of it. For if the Scripture is true, and I believe it is, there never was a man on earth who had so many followers in so short a time. Caiaphas says Jesus had been preaching three years, and he then had more followers than Abraham. This causes me to say again that if the New Testament records are true, then the historical items contained in this book must be true. If these items, or items like them, be not true, then the items of the New Testament are not true. That is, no man dare to say these are the identical items, but items like these, and why not these? They came from the right place. The parchments and scrolls upon which they are written are such as were used in those days, but to say these are the same is to say what no man dare say. The time has been too long and the distance to the place where the records are kept is too great to allow all men to make the examination for themselves. Hence, I ask all to consider this question fairly.

Let me invite the attention of the reader to the known histories in this country. The Torah commentator Rashi, who wrote in Paris in the eleventh century, says in Volume III page 190, that in the formation of the ancient libraries there were men appointed called 'baalie suphoths', which means 'book-compilers'. The business of these men was to take the sheets of parchment of the various authors and pin their dates together, bind them in bundles and have them bound with clasps between cedar boards. This was a trade, and it required the best of scholars to do it. They were called baalie suphoths. We find that the works of Philo were compiled by Pseudonymus Joseph Ben Gorion, 150 AD. This Ben Gorion was a Jewish rabbi, a pharisean doctor. Josephus was compiled by Ekaba, another Jewish doctor, at the close of the second century; and so with all the historians who lived near the Christian era. Josephus was published in book-form by Havercamp, in Amsterdam, in 1729. Now all he had to guide him was what 'Ekaba' had said. So it is with Philo, which was put in book-form by Mangey, in London, in 1742. All he had was what 'Ben Gorion' had pleased to compile of his works, and, as there was deadly hatred between Jews and Christians at that time, it is most reasonable to believe that those compilers would leave anything out that would favor the Christians. It was in their own interest at that time to bury the very name of Christ in eternal oblivion. This is the reason why all the historians who lived and wrote in those days are made to say so very little about Christ or his followers.

Now in looking over the histories we find comparatively nothing said about Jesus Christ. Such a thing could not be if the New Testament is true. No man could make me believe that such events occurred as

are recorded in the Scriptures without accounts of them being made in the State records and by the public writers of that day. Although I have had this thrown in my face so often by infidels, I never saw the reason till I commenced this investigation. If any man will take the pains to examine this question he will find that all the sophers, or scribes, were pharisees; they were the doctors, lawyers, orators, poets, and statesmen of the times. The Hillel [the Elder] and Sham-mai schools made more scholars than all the world besides in the last days of the Jewish Commonwealth. Almost every nation under the sun patronized these schools.

Now, being satisfied that I was on the right track, the next thing was to find out what had become of the original manuscripts. Had Rothgad, Havercamp, and Mangey destroyed the manuscripts when they were done with them? This I knew could not be from the fact that these parchments were either in the hands of government or individual libraries, and they could not destroy them or take them away. And I knew if these manuscripts had been kept till 1754 they must be in existence yet. Only a few years ago there were 128 volumes of manuscripts presented to the British Museum, which were looked upon with interest, and, while I am writing this, there comes to my hand a dispatch from Vienna to the London Times. I will give it in full, as I think it will be beneficial to the reader.

The dispatch is as follows:

«« Ancient Manuscripts. The sifting and arrangement of the papyrus collection bought by Archduke Rainer have led to further interesting discoveries. Of the hieroglyphic, hieratic, demotic, and Coptic papyri, about twenty date from the pre-Christian period. Among these is one nearly three thousand years old, in the hieratic letter, containing the representation of a funeral, with a well-preserved sketch of the deceased, some hieroglyphic legends, and a demotic papyrus on the subject of mathematics. Much more numerous are the Coptic documents, about one thousand in all, mostly letters and legal documents of the period from the sixth to the tenth century of our era. There are some important papyri containing translations of the Bible in the central Egyptian dialect, of which there have hitherto been found but few specimens; and a leaf of parchment from an old octavo edition of the book of Ruth, in the Sahidi dialect.

Among the Greek papyri is a hitherto unknown speech of Isocrates, one of the finest specimens of Alexandrian caligraphy. Another fragment has been found of the book of the Thucydides manuscript, previously mentioned. Portions, also, have been discovered of the Iliad, and a paraphrase of the Fourth Book. Then a manuscript has been found dating from the beginning of the fourth century, being thus one of the oldest Christian manuscripts. The collection contains many well-preserved documents in an almost continuous series of the

Roman and Byzantine emperors, beginning with Trajan and ending with Heraclius.

There are also documents in the Iranic and Semitic languages. The former are written on papyrus, parchment, and skins, and among them are two fragments which, it is believed, will furnish the key to the Pehlewi language. Among the Arab papyri 25 documents have been found with the original leaden seals attached. They begin with a fragment of the 54<sup>th</sup> year of the Hegira [the Hegira starts at 632 AD]. Another is an official document of the 19<sup>th</sup> year of the Hegira, appointing a revenue collector. Perhaps the most valuable part of the collection is a collection of 155 Arabian documents, on cotton paper, of the eighth century, which is about the time of the invention of this material by the Arabs, to the year 953. Many thousands of manuscripts have still to be deciphered. »»

In the early centuries there was a good deal of what is known as the Apologetical Writings. I made it my business to examine these, and found them to be a defence of Christianity. The first of this form of writing was presented to the Emperor Adrian by Quadratus, in the year 126 AD. A portion of this we find in Eusebius, page 93. There was another by Aristides, at about the same time. These two authors are found only in fragments, preserved by other historians. Their writings are mainly pleas for clemency for those who professed Christianity and were being persecuted.

Justin Martyr also wrote twice on this subject once to the Roman Senate and once to Antonius. These were published in English by W. Reeves, in 1709, at Leipsic.

Tertullian wrote two volumes, and Vincentius wrote a commentary on them. These are found in Paris. They are very valuable works – perhaps the most valuable of the ancient writings – from the fact, recorded in them, that the Christians, in giving reasons for asking favors, refer to the records made by the Jews and Jewish writers as well as the reports of the Roman officers who were the governors of Judeah at that time; and of course their reference to these records demonstrates that the records were there.

In Tertullian, Vol. II. page 29, Vincentius says the Christians' argument was based on the doctrine of the Bible, showing that the God of the Christians could save, and referred the pagans to the many instances where he had interposed and saved, when none but a God like the Christians' God could save. For, said they, what can a God made of wood or brass do in time of danger? They had no power to put forth and exert themselves to save. Vincentius says the pagan would answer that these images were the representations of their gods, that these gods of wood and iron had invisible spirits that exerted as much power as the God of the Christians. Vincentius says he



did not see much difference in their doctrines when they got to understand each other.

I remember that, while on the ship, we had an Irish priest on board, and in conversation one day, while asking him about many things in the Catholic Church, I inquired why he had a crucifix hanging in his room. Said I: "You do not think there is any virtue in that image of brass?" "No", said he, "no more than there was in the serpent of brass that Moses made and placed on a pole. There were no healing virtues in that brass, but the bitten Israelite believed in the command, which belief or faith controlled his action and produced obedience and hence he was healed. And so, he said, in this case he no more believed there were any saving qualities in that image than I believe my mother's picture could be to me a mother.

Let the reader refer to the first centuries and mark what a disputation there was in the ancient church about pictures. May we not flow back into it? And as this subject of picture-worship created so much dissatisfaction in the first centuries it may do so again.

While investigating this question I found that Arcadius, the eldest son of Theodosius the Great, succeeded his father to the throne in 395 AD and divided the Roman Empire into what was known in that day as the Eastern and Western Empires.

Arcadius chose the Eastern [part of the Empire] and fixed his seat of government at Constantinople. He made his brother Honorius Emperor of the Western, fixing his seat of government at Rome. It was not long until their jealousy was kindled, which resulted in hatred and terminated in a war which finally proved their overthrow. In reading the Ante-Nicene Fathers, published in Edinburgh in 24 octavo volumes, in Vol. XII. page 114, it is said that the beginning of this war was on account of Honorius wishing to have his young princes educated at Constantinople free of charge, giving as his reason that the great library there had once belonged to Rome. When his brother Arcadius refused, he tried to get the library divided, and Arcadius refused this also. They then went to war, and while the two brothers were thus engaged, Alaricus engaged the Western Empire and overthrew it. In hunting through this vast library of books, I found what was called the Homilies of Clementine; Vol. XIII. page 194; there were the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts and Revelations, with all the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, including the laws of the High Priest, the laws of the Temple Service, the Records of the Sanhedrin, giving the Jewish laws and customs for hundreds of years, with all the treaties and records of the courts.

Now, my idea was that if these records were found in the library of the Vatican at Rome and in the Seraglio and Atmedan libraries at Constantinople and Alexandria, so these men could get them nearly 300 years ago, why are they not there now?

Dr. Isaac Wise, who is President of the Hebrew School at Cincinnati and, by the way, is one of the best Hebrew scholars in America, frequently quotes from the Talmud and Sanhedrin, in his History of the Commonwealth of Israel, giving reference to the various circumstances, and often gives the name of the scribe who did the writing. So, I find these records have always been in the hands of the Jewish rabbis, and you need not tell me these things have been only produced by the later Jewish nation, for we find quotations made at the time and by the men who lived in the days of Christ. Those quotations correspond with other histories we have of the same events. The only difference is that the rabbis put a different construction on those events from what the Christians do. This is the great difficulty, after all. Like a celebrated lawyer, after reading this book, told his friend it convinced him of the truth of the facts in the Scriptures, but it did not convince him of its spiritual definition. This is the final point of importance: whether the soul is lost or saved – that is, to take the facts of the Scriptures and yield to them as spiritual truth. Colens the First, who was an Epicurean philosopher, wrote a treatise against Christianity and was answered by Origen. [Not Bishop Colenso, but Celsus is meant.] This work in eight volumes was published in Paris by Vallart, in 1746. In it the disputants appealed alternately to these writings or to the reports made by the Romans. It shows clearly that the whole of the Jewish doctrines, records and all, were then in possession of the Romans.

Nero refused to believe in these things, which he might have done if he had taken the pains to look into those sacred treasures of learning that were on file in the Senate Chamber. But Origen, says Nero, was only moved by ambition, with the love of destruction before his eyes. He never stopped to consider nor consult the opinions or wishes of others. Here, again, I found an unintentional reference to these things. Now the reader must remember that the records were there at that time, for no one disputed the fact. Yet, in proving the unnecessary hostility of Nero, Origen makes mention of these other facts, showing the records to be in the city of Rome, how they came there, and what they taught, that is, a part of these records were brought from Jerusalem. They were the writings of the Jews and the Romans who had been officers in the Jewish kingdom by Roman authority, and these were Roman officers, which made them a part of and accountable to the Roman government. Can any intelligent man believe that these men would have been allowed to transact the business of the Romans and that no records be made of it in the archives of the government? Such a thing is most absurd. The reader will bear in mind that government among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans was much more strictly administered than in this country. Thus, all such records, as referred to the actions of the courts and the government officers, had to be preserved. I now call the attention of the reader to the investigation of the preservation of the sacred parchments from which came our Bible.

First, to the works of Benjamin Kennicott D.D. [D.D. means Doctor of Divinity.], entitled *Vetus Testamentum*, published in England in 1780. This is a little more than hundred years ago. We find that he got from the Codex of Hillel 600 manuscripts. When did this Hillel live? The author of the Codex lived in the first century before our Christian era. Dr. Kennicott also got 16 manuscripts from the Samaritan Pentateuch. Then I ask attention to John G. Rosenmueller's *Librarium* consisting of five volumes, printed in Leipzig in 1736, and also his *Scholia Testament*, all from manuscript. Then to Brian Walton D.D., born in Yorkshire in 1600, who published his polyglot Bible from the Hebrew manuscript. Because these are given to us by great men and they suit our notions, they are never doubted. If it is too apt to arise our enthousiasm, it is not likely to be investigated as closely as it should. And, again, we are inclined to investigate those things that suit our tastes and interests. But while certain things are interesting to us, we should not forget that there are other things equally interesting to others. While we may be interested only in the sacred histories that make for our peace, and although the arguments of our opponents may not be very pleasant to hear, we should remember that the salvation of others may depend on (the right answers) to such arguments.

We should not be opposed to any evidence that may give strength to any subject and thereby redound to good in a general way, especially if this evidence does not have a tendency to weaken our faith. It is so with this book, it cannot weaken the faith of the Christian who has believed without foreign testimony, but brings strong corroborative testimony to enable others who are less credulous than we to believe. Hence in the examination of the various versions of the Bible and of the manner in which they were dug up out of the old manuscripts, from the rubbish of the ancient world, difficulties are encountered, and others may not believe as readily as we do. Duranzo [ought we to read Phrantzes?], a Greek historian, who wrote 36 volumes in Constantinople at the close of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth century, in referring to the prosperity of the city and nation, says in Vol. XIII. page 54, that Constantinople enjoyed educational advantages over all other cities, and that this was due, to some extent, to the fact that the Christians, under the instructions of their Emperor, had gathered and brought there literature from all parts of the world. Indeed, it was the great seat of learning of the world. On page 128 he refers to a war that was carried on about the great library that had been brought there by the Roman Emperor when he embraced Christianity. Again he says, that when the followers of Mohammed locked up the great library, they excluded the learned and with them the wealth of the city. In Vol. XIV page 17, in speaking of the battle of Tanze, he says it was fought over the sacred books that had been deposited there by the ancient Christians. From these indirect references I discovered there must be great deposits of sacred literature in these old libraries. These histories are in the Paris library for the inspection of anyone.

Notwithstanding the art of printing has a tendency to do away with and supersede the written Scriptures, yet there are many valuable manuscripts in existence, some of which are of great value in the interpretation of the Scriptures.

First, the Hebrew manuscripts. These are either rolls designed for the use of synagogues, or square manuscripts, designed for private use. The former are all on parchment and written with the greatest care and accuracy. The others are written on vellum or paper.

Dr. Kennicott says all that are now available were written between the tenth and fourteenth centuries. Of course these were written from the originals. How often they have been rewritten in the previous 1400 years we cannot say, but we know there are many opportunities for change. These manuscripts have been collated by Dr. Kennicott and De Rossi, and amount to 1,135. We can say that it is more than probable that as the Jewish rabbis did this work they may have left out many things that appeared to them contrary [to their opinions and beliefs].

The next are the Greek. Of these manuscripts immense numbers still exist. Dr. Holmes has collected 135 of them. Some of these are preserved from the fourth century. Of course, these are not the records that were made when the recorded events took place.

Now, reader, our present Bible comes from these manuscripts. The first English Bible was published by J. Wickliffe in 1360, just 90 years before printing was invented. The first Bible printed in our language was by William Tindall, assisted by Miles Coverdale, in 1526. When Tindall was executed for heresy by the Catholics, his works were continued by Coverdale and John Rogers. This book was suppressed time and again, and reprinted by different parties until it went through 22 different editions. The last was that which proceeded from the Hampton Court conference in 1603. There were so many errors in the Bishop's Bible that the King James' Bible was put on foot and printed in 1611.

Now suppose we consider the many Bibles published by different sects, nations and individuals, and all coming from these Hebrew, Greek, and Latin manuscripts. The reader must know that the manuscripts have gone through many hands. This we know from the fact that we find Bible manuscripts still in existence, and from these we find Greek manuscripts, Samaritan manuscripts taken from the Hebrew, the Spanish manuscripts, the German manuscripts, the Italian manuscripts, and many others. The reader is referred to the Bodleian Library in the British Museum, and to the libraries at Leiden, Paris, and Rome. We also have some in America, at Philadelphia, in the libraries of the Quakers and in the library of the Antiquarian Society.

The manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible were compiled in the second century. But they never were translated till 607 AD by Bishop Adhelm, under the direction of King Alfred. There were a number of parts of these Hebrew manuscripts translated in the second century in the Arabic language. It was printed for the Propaganda at Rome, in 1671, in three volumes. The Armenian version was made in the fourth century of the Christian era by Miesrob and Isaac, and printed at Amsterdam by Uskin, an Armenian bishop, who was charged by his enemies with following the Vulgate. It was printed at Constantinople in 1705 and at Venice in 1805. The Coptic New Testament was published by Wilkins at Oxford in 1716.

The Vulgate is an ancient manuscript, taken from the Hebrew and translated into the Latin in the second century; also one of the Greek and one of the Syriac. These are all of the same date. This Vulgate in the Latin was used in Africa. The Church at Rome was under Greek control at this time and rejected the Latin Vulgate, and used what was called at that time the *Vetus Latina*, or old Latin. This is the history of Tertullian, Vol. I page 202.

In the fourth century Jerome tells us there was another translation of the Vulgate, under the instruction of St. Augustine, and St. Jerome recommends this in the highest terms. About the fifth century there was another translation made, which is called the Codex, in the Latin language. There was one at Alexandria, one in the Vatican, and one at Sinai. Parts of these are preserved in the British Museum. They were presented to King Charles by Cyril Lucaris, who was patriarch at Constantinople and had been patriarch at Alexandria, and brought these books with him. The Codex of Sinai is in Greek, and is the same that Dr. Tischendorf found and was declared by the scholars of Leipsic to have been written in the fourth century.

In the year 748 of the Roman Empire and 330 of the Christian era Constantin the Great removed his seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, and took with him all the records of the Christians to that city, as will be shown in a letter from him in this book in regard to having the Holy Scriptures in manuscript, and having 50 volumes bound and kept on deposit. When the followers of Mohammed took possession of Constantinople they had too much respect for these sacred scrolls to let them be destroyed, but had them all nicely cased and deposited in the Sophia Mosque [church that was turned into a mosque]. History informs us of the dreadful struggle that took place between the Greeks and Romans over the sacred parchments in the days of the Crusades; and it seems to us that Divine Providence has had something to do with the preservation of these sacred writings. These scrolls look more like rolls of narrow carpet wound round a windlass than anything else. But as I have described them elsewhere I will not attempt a further description here.

Another question arises in the mind of the reader, and that is: How was it possible for these writings to be preserved so long? I answer that there are many works much older than these in existence. Those of Homer are 900 years older. Why not these? Another reason why these writings have not been brought before the world is that no man has searched for these chronicles as I have done. After getting hold of *Acta Pilati* as I did, accidentally, I made the investigation of these questions my special business for ten years – corresponding with many historians and scholars, sending for all the books that could instruct me on these great questions, engaging two expert scholars, Drs. McIntosh of Scotland, and Twyman of England, and going to the city of Rome, paying our way through the Vatican, and then to Constantinople, where we examined those ancient records, sparing neither time nor expense to acquire a knowledge of them. Then it may be asked again: May not I be deceived? May not these men have imposed upon me? To this I would say: That is impossible. Then it might be argued: Might not these writings have been manufactured to make money out of? If so, it was a poor business, for this is the first and only book ever produced from them. It certainly was a bad speculation on their part. But one says: Did not Gregory IX. burn 20 cartloads of Talmud? Who says so but a Jewish rabbi? If he did, they were the Talmuds of Babylon and not those of Jerusalem. There is no body of Christians who are stronger adherents of Jesus Christ than the Roman Catholics. Why should they want to burn the Talmud of Jerusalem, which were so full of the doctrines and historical events that are so near and dear to them? No man can go into the Vatican library without a guard over him, who watches him closely, so that he cannot move a leaf or change a word or letter of anything that is there. If they will not consent to even the slightest change, it is not probable they would burn their works. Men from all over the world are there. Often when we crossed the Tiber, before it was fairly light, there were a thousand strangers between us and St. Peter's gate, waiting to be admitted at the opening of the gate that leads into the Vatican. One more evidence to the reader: There are at least 500 quotations made from the Sanhedrin and Talmud of the Jews by men who have denied the existence [of the facts of the life of Jesus as recorded in the Biblical record]. Now I call attention to history, and I will give you the name and page of the quotes, so that all can read for themselves.

First: Rabbi Akiba, a reformed Jewish priest, Vol. I page 22, quotes from Celsus, an enemy of the Church. He says there was a dreadful earthquake at the time Jesus was crucified, and that the mist that arose from it covered the earth for three hours. On page 28 he says that Jesus was the son of Mary; that he was the founder of the sect called Christians. On page 48 he says Jesus was crucified on the eve of the Passover. He gives extracts from the apostles, and never denies in a single instance, but admits their genuineness. He quotes the books, and makes extracts from the names they bear. He makes particular mention of his incarnation, of his being born of a virgin, of



his being worshipped by the Magi; of his flight into Egypt; of the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem. On page 52 he speaks of his baptism by John and the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and of the voice that was heard out of heaven. He speaks of the miracles done by Jesus and never doubts the facts in any instance, but attributes them to the art of necromancy he had learned in Egypt. But did the reader ever hear of a thaumaturgist producing a descent of the Holy Spirit or causing voices to be heard from the heavens? Such absurdities are not spoken of except when they are urged against the Christian religion.

Aretas, one of the kings of Arabia, who was a philosopher as well as a king, in speaking of the laws of nature, in Vol. VII page 14, says that Jesus of Judeah was a philosopher who stood above the laws of nature; that he controlled all the elements of nature with almighty power; that the winds, thunders, and lightnings obeyed him. He speaks of these facts as being so common that it would be folly to dispute them.

Justin says, in Vol. II page 42, that the several Roman governors in their respective provinces made reports of the important events that occurred in their jurisdiction, and they were spread on the senatorial dockets at Rome. We find in this same work, page 128, that he appealed to Antoninus and the Senate for clemency for the Christians, and after referring to their many virtues, and to Christ as their leader, he added: "And that these things are so, I refer you to the records of the Senate made by Pontius Pilate and others in his day." The learned Tertullian, in his *Apology for Christianity*, about the year 200, after speaking of our Saviour's Crucifixion and Resurrection, and his appearance to the disciples, and ascension into heaven in the sight of the same disciples, who were ordained by him to spread the gospel over the world, thus proceeds: "Of all these things relating to Christ, Pilate himself, in his conscience already a Christian, sent an account to Tiberius, then Emperor." The same writer in the same apology thus relates the proceedings of Tiberius on receiving this information: "There was an ancient decree that no one should be received for a deity unless he was first approved by the Senate. Tiberius, in whose time the Christian name (or religion) had its rise, having received from Palestine, in Syria, an account of such things as confirmed the truth of (Christ's) divinity, proposed to the Senate that he should be enrolled among the Roman gods, and gave his own prerogative vote in favor of the motion. But the Senate, without whose consent no deification could take place, rejected it because the Emperor himself had declined the same honor. Nevertheless, the Emperor persisted in his opinion, and threatened punishment to the accusers of the Christians." Search your own commentaries (or public writings) and you will find there that Nero was the first who raged with the imperial sword against this sect, then rising most at Rome (Horn's Introduction, Vol. I page 82).

Now, I would ask, if there were no such records there, would these men have made such appeals? And if they were there, could such things be forged and palmed off on the Roman Senate? It seems to me to ask the question is enough. Now, if any man will trace out these things he will find that I have as much reason for believing the genuineness of the contents of this book, as I have to believe the genuineness of the Scriptures, looking at the question from a human standpoint. First, you must know that the manuscript from which this book was taken has not gone through so many translations nor been put in so many different languages, from the fact that it is not to be found in another language. And, secondly, there was no necessity for it, and as to this being forged there was no occasion for that from the fact it favors no religious denomination and advocates the tenets of no religious sect. Now, I am convinced there was such a man as Herod Antipater, and I know that he could not kill all the male children in a city without giving reasons for it, and there must have been more or less record made of it. I am convinced there was such a man as Herod Antipas and I know he dare not behead such a man as John the Baptist is presented to be, without a trial, without having to account to some court. I know that Pilate was a Roman officer and that his actions were watched closely. All his public acts had to be recorded upon the Roman dockets.

I do not see why these records should have been destroyed. I am convinced the Jews at that day were looking for a Redeemer, and when the great excitement was reported at Bethlehem it would be not unreasonable that the Jews should make an investigation of the matter. Again, I know if the Scriptures are true, Mary was subject to the death penalty unless she could satisfactorily prove her innocence. I was convinced the Jews must have looked into this matter, and that it would be found recorded somewhere. I knew that if there were such a man as they presented Jesus to be, he could not be tried in the High Priest's court and condemned to death, and executed by the Roman authorities, unless there were some record made of it by both the Jews and Romans. Here we have the whole of these records, and why are they not true? They comport with the Bible. They are just the records we should expect from the Scriptures. They were made or dated at the right time. They came from the place where these records were made. They were written in the same language that was used at that time. Now, if all this is so, why would not it be true?

I offer this book to the public feeling assured it can do no harm to anyone or to any Church, but that it will be read by thousands with great interest, and will convince the infidel of the truth of the Scriptures. As Dr. Miller observed: "This book never was needed until now, and it is like all God's providences, always brought out at the right time." Another minister wrote to say he "was more than delighted", that it was like calling up the dead, that all the circumstances of Calvary were brought vividly before him, and when he

read Caiaphas' second report he both wept and rejoiced. Such is the testimony of almost everyone who reads it.

In an extract from a private letter to the Brunswicker Dr. Rubin says: "I saw, while in the Vatican at Rome last week, Dr. W. D. Mahan of Boonville, Mo., Drs. McIntosh and Twyman of Scotland, with a number of clerks, both readers and scribes, going through these old manuscripts and scrolls that have been lying there for hundreds, yea, thousands of years. They seem to be men of great age and learning and well qualified for their business. They were going next week to Constantinople to go through the records of the Sanhedrin and the ancient Talmud of the Jews. Their object is to bring out a new book as a supplement to the Acta Pilati. I am satisfied, from the character of the men and the nature of the book, it will prove to be one of the most interesting books ever presented to the Christian world, from the fact that all the works on archæology have been written in such a style that but very few could read and understand them."



Constantinople, Turkey, October 16, 1883.

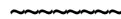
#### TO THE PEOPLE OF NORTH AMERICA.

DEAR FRIENDS: I take pleasure in addressing you this letter, as I feel assured I am doing a good work for my Father who is in heaven. Then, friends, permit me to say to you that I was introduced to my friend, W. D. Mahan, of Boonville, Mo., by my friends of Leipsic, Germany. I engaged to meet him in Paris, France, and when he showed me his plans and the subjects that he wanted, and showed me his notes of reference, the names of others, and books that he had been hunting for ten years, I became satisfied that if we could succeed he would bring out one of the best books ever offered to the Christian world except the Bible. We departed to the Vatican at Rome, received permission to examine the greatest library in the world, and to my astonishment the first thing we called for was brought to hand in a short time. I mean Pilate's reports, which were more than satisfactory. The next were the Senate's records respecting the investigation of Herod Antipater's conduct at Bethlehem, and Herod Antipas on various charges (one of which was the execution of John the Baptist), the Hillel letters, and the Shammai laws. We then proceeded to Constantinople and went through the records of the Sanhedrin and Talmud of the Jews that were carried there and preserved by Constantine in the year 337. Here we found Melker's Report (who was priest at Bethlehem at the time that Jesus of Nazareth was born) in respect to the prophecy concerning the birth of Jesus, which is very deep and profound. Next we came upon the

report of Gamaliel, who was sent by the Sanhedrin to interrogate Joseph and Mary concerning the child Jesus, which will prove to be one of the most interesting subjects that was ever read by man. Then, the next thing we found was the report of Caiaphas to the Sanhedrin. When read it will awaken the minds of men and give a very different view of this matter to what we have had.

After we had finished the report, Brother Mahan insisted that we should unwind the scroll further, and in doing so we found his second report, which caused us to weep like children, and we both thanked God that we continued the search. We also found many strange historical items, such as will be of great interest to the world at this time. And as Brother Mahan is going to publish his book in America, I can most heartily recommend it.

M. McINTOSH.



Market Place, City of Rome, Italy.

DEAR WIFE: It seems long since I left home, but God is here as well as in America, and it is my chief delight to report you and the children to his throne of mercy daily. I was landed at Marseilles, France, after twelve days out from New York. We had a splendid trip, all but the first two days. We left New York in a gale, and I must confess I was very much alarmed. It seemed to me the water was much higher all around us than where the ship was. That made it more frightful, for it looked as if the ship sunk or was sinking for the first two days. She was sometimes on her end, then on her side, and then would seem to turn almost over, but at every tilt she made I prayed St. Peter's prayer. I think I did more praying the first two days than I had done in two years. But the second day I began to cast up my accounts, not with my Maker, nor with my creditors, but with my stomach. I was awfully sick.

Captain Stikes said the storm in starting out made it much worse on us than it would have been if the weather had been clear and calm, but the third day the sea began to calm, and so did my stomach. I was able to go out in the evening, but we were still going uphill; we had no further trouble all the way, but after three or four days it looked as if I would never get enough to eat. Our fare was poor, much more so than on the English line, so I was told by men that had travelled both lines. I shall return by another route. I met Dr. McIntosh at St. Elgin waiting for me. He is one of the nicest old men and one of the finest scholars I ever met. I feel ashamed in his presence, though he is so grand and noble he can hide my own defects from me better than I can myself. He was very much surprised when I showed him my notes of reference. He did not see how I could get hold of these things so far away. We found Dr. Twyman and his men at the Vatican, and we are working bravely. The very first thing the guard

brought was the Acta Palati. The Doctor was delighted when he saw it. We have two guards: one brings the articles as we call for them and the other sits and watches to see that the books and parchments are not mutilated. Today was the day of the Pope's holy auditory. We were taken in by the guard, and I must confess I never had such feelings in all my life. The room is, I suppose, three hundred feet or more square. There must have been ten or twelve hundred in the congregation, all men, mostly priests and officers. The Pope is a venerable old man. I saw nothing different in his dress from any other priest, nothing gaudy about him. He sang the mass in the pure old Latin language. His voice was clear and sweet. After he was through, quite a number of the priests came and knelt at his feet. He laid his hands gently on each of their heads and pronounced a blessing, but they did not kiss his great toe. I never saw as solemn a congregation in my life. In fact, it would be impossible for a man to be otherwise in that room. The dome of this room surpasses all the sights my eyes ever beheld. It contains hundreds of windows in the form of eyes with golden lids and lashes, all emitting rays of light of various colors. They seemed so natural, I thought I could almost see them wink. They are to represent the all-seeing eye. These eyes are the light of the room. The scene of magnificence beggars description. There are too many things to be described. A man will have a higher appreciation of the Catholic Church, where he sees her enthroned in the hearts of this great church, and I shall ever have a different feeling toward them from what I have had. We have all the text-books we need, Buxtorf, Gesenius, Laportees, and others. We will get through in the Vatican in a few days. We will leave Dr. Twyman and three clerks here, as we find the Hillelite letters and Shemiate and Abtalian laws here in book-form. They will translate such parts of them, as we want and send them to me. They will come in a roll. If they come before I get home, take special care of them. Dr. McIntosh and I, with one clerk, will go to Constantinople in a day or two. The Doctor has been there, and he thinks he will find all that I want in the Haga Sophia Library. He says, the twenty cartloads of Talmud that history tells us were burned by Gregory IX were the Talmud of Babylon, but the Talmud of Jerusalem are all safe, and so are the records of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin – that these documents were carried there by Constantine. If so, that is all I want. The Doctor thinks it will be one of the most important books ever brought before the public, except for the Bible, as it would give the pros and cons of the outside world at that time. But I have so many things I would like to say and it is now after 1 o'clock AM. As to home affairs, I am too far off to say anything more, besides I have all confidence in your judgement. I think now that I will be at home by the 10<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of December, and I shall write no more unless something happens. May God bless you. Farewell.

W. D. MAHAN.

Columbia, Mo., January 25, 1887.

This is to certify that I am well acquainted with the Rev. W. D. Mahan of Boonville, Missouri. I have known him well for a number of years, having spent several months at his house at different times. I was at his house in Boonville, Mo., shortly after his return (as he then stated to me) from Rome and Constantinople. I gave him some assistance in recopying some of his manuscripts for his book. I saw, examined, and to some extent assisted in arranging the various subjects and chapters in his book.

Judging from the handwriting of said manuscripts, there must have been two or more persons engaged in writing them, as there was a distinct difference in the handwriting. I was impressed at the time with the belief, from the writing and spelling, that the parties were of foreign birth and education.

I have no interest in this matter, and make the above statement at the request and in justice to the Rev. W. D. Mahan, as an old and valued friend.

J. B. DOUGLASS.

Personally appeared before me, a notary public, within and for the county of Boone, and State of Missouri, General J. B. Douglass, to me well known, and made affidavit to the foregoing certificate. Witness my hand and notarial seal hereto affixed at Columbia, Mo., this 25<sup>th</sup> day of January AD 1887.

FRANK D. EVANS,  
Notary Public.

State of Missouri, County of Cooper, ss.

Be it known that on this, the 12<sup>th</sup> day of January, AD 1887, personally came before me, the undersigned, clerk of the Circuit Court of Cooper County, in the State of Missouri, John S. McFarland, well known to me to be a reputable citizen of the city of Boonville, Mo., who, being by me first duly sworn, on his oath says: I have been personally acquainted with Rev. W. D. Mahan for sixteen years or more, and have always found him to be honorable and trustworthy, and a very useful minister in the Church to which he belonged. To my knowledge he was for some time previous to 1883 engaged in preparing himself for a trip to Europe, and that in the fall of 1883 he took leave of his family and friends and started for the cities of Rome and Constantinople, to investigate those old records that he said he had found was there on archæology. After he had been gone some time, his wife received a letter from him dated at Rome, Italy. I did not see the postmarks on the letter, but understood it was from Rome.

After some months Mr. Mahan returned and brought quite a lot of manuscripts with him, some of which he read to me, and which were



very interesting. These are as near the facts in the case as I can remember at this time.

JOHN S. McFarland

Subscribed and sworn to before me, on this the 12<sup>th</sup> day of  
January, 1887. Witness my hand and official seal.

CHARLES A. HOUK,  
Clerk of Circuit Court of Cooper County. Mo.  
By H. A. HUTCHINSON.

State of Missouri, County of Cooper, ss.

Be it known that on this 12<sup>th</sup> day of January, AD 1887, personally came before me the undersigned, clerk of the Circuit Court of Cooper County, in the State of Missouri, R. W. Whitlow and W. G. Pendleton, composing the firm of Whitlow & Pendleton, real estate and loan agents, of the city of Boonville, in said county, who, being by me first duly sworn, on their oaths say: We have known the Rev. W. D. Mahan, of Boonville, Mo., for a period of more than ten years. He came to our office in the fall of 1883 and told us he was going to Rome with a view to collect materials for a book which he intended to write, and that he had not sufficient money to defray the expenses of the trip; at his request we loaned him two hundred dollars. Shortly afterward Mr. Mahan disappeared from Boonville, and it was a considerable while before we again met him here at Boonville, when he informed us he had made the trip to Rome, Italy, during the time of his disappearance. A letter purporting to have been written by the said Mahan to his wife from Rome, Italy, was published in a newspaper at Boonville, Mo. Soon after Mr. Mahan reappeared at Boonville he published and circulated his book. Of course we did not follow him to see him at Rome, but the foregoing are the facts within our knowledge.

R. E. WHITLOW,  
W. G. PENDLETON,  
Attorneys-at-Law.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, on this the 12<sup>th</sup> day of  
January, 1887.

CHARLES A. HOUK,  
Clerk of Circuit Court, Cooper County, Mo.

## CHAPTER II - ARCHKOVOLUME

### A SHORT SKETCH OP THE TALMUD

THE Hebrew word lamod signifies 'to teach' and to 'teach by example'. The word example is always understood. To teach – this is what is meant by tradition. It means that the child learns from its father. From this word we get the word talmud.

We also have the word shanoh, which means 'to learn', and gamor, which means 'having learned' or 'having ceased to learn'. The records of the Talmud are written on parchment or papyrus. The scroll is about 20 inches wide, and wound around a roller. Of these records of the Talmud there have been many books written by the Jewish rabbis.

The most important is the Mishna. Its name indicates what it is: the Law [in Hebrew it means repeated study]. It contains the laws of all nations, or a part of the laws of the various nations of the earth, such as the Jewish Sanhedrin thought were compatible with the laws of God. Its principal teachings are what we would call the moral law of God that is to say, anything is right if God says it is right, and this is the only reason why it is right. This work has been the great reference-book for the Jewish rabbis of all ages. It was translated [?] and compiled by Hillel, and is a very useful book for scholars. [Not so: Hillel the Elder stood at the Mishna's early development, but most of it was compiled later by Rabbi Yehudah.]

The next in point of value is the Tosephta. This word in the Hebrew means 'treatment' [not Hebrew but Aramaic: supplement], and [the work at hand] concentrates on the ritual of the Temple Service. It is a voluminous work that in reality is a regulator of human life, for it also contains the dealings of husband and wife, parent and child, master and pupil. In fact, it enters into all the details of life with such thoughtfulness and in such a beautiful style that it should be exceedingly interesting to the young. It certainly contains the finest system of morals in the world.

Then comes the Mechilta, which means 'government' in the Aramaic language [Mekhilta is an Aramaic word corresponding to the Hebrew middah: a measure or rule, in this case referring to certain fixed rules of instructions based on Scripture]. This book tells of the organisation of the Sanhedrin and its powers, both the greater and the less, the greater to be composed of 70 members and the less of 24. These two legislative bodies had jurisdiction over the whole of the Jewish Commonwealth. Although they possessed great power, it was not absolute. There was another court that exercised the highest authority of the nation. That was the court of elders and priests. This court

consisted of twelve men, and its chairman was the High Priest. It decided all appeals, and could not be appealed from. This is the court that tried Jesus of Nazareth. Although it was a court of appeals, it had exclusive jurisdiction of capital crimes.

I will give the form of a trial of an accused in this court, as it is given in Mechilta. At the time that Jesus was tried by this court, the Jewish government had been deprived of its executive power. This was one of the concessions in the capitulation to Augustus Cæsar. At this time the Roman Emperor's consent had to be obtained, though he had to use the Jewish soldiers – for the Romans had only one hundred soldiers at Jerusalem. They were continually engaged in war, and needed all their soldiers at home. When an accused person was brought before this court of the High Priests, they held a preliminary trial in order, if possible, to force a plea. If they could not, the accused was sentenced and then sent to the Roman authority, or governor, for his approval. The accused was then remanded to the High Priest, and from him to the Sanhedrin, with the charges written out with the names of the witnesses by which they had been proved. If they approved the decision of the High Priest, the prisoner was sent back to the High Priest for his final trial. This court of twelve men was required by the Jewish law to fast and pray one whole day before the trial commenced. They were then required to bring the urim and thummim out of the holy place where they were kept, and to place them before the High Priest. The High Priest was closely veiled so that no one could see him, thus representing God doing his work. Then there was what was called the lactees, consisting of two men, one of whom stood at the door of the court with a red flag in his hand, and the other sat on a white horse some distance on the road that led to the place of execution. Each of these men continually cried the name of the criminal, his crime, and who were the witnesses, and called upon any person who knew anything in his favor to come forward and testify. After the testimony was taken, the eleven men cast lots or voted, and their decision was shown to the High Priest. As he was too holy to act by himself, but only as the mouthpiece of God, he went up to a basin or a ewer, as it is called by them, and washed his hands in token of the innocence of the court, thus testifying that the criminal's own action had brought condemnation on himself. As soon as the soldiers saw this, they took the man to the place of execution, and there stoned him till he was dead. Not one of them was allowed to speak, not even to whisper, while the execution was going on. Nothing was heard but the pelting of stones and the shrieks of the criminal. To my mind this would be a most awful mode of death, and one that would be likely to deter others from committing crime.

Now, I ask the reader to consider the mode of a Roman execution, and see what a beautiful chain of divine Providence is brought out in the execution of Jesus of Nazareth. There was a law in the criminal code of the Romans, enacted by Meelesen [probably Melissos, a

Roman writer mentioned by Pliny the Elder among those from whom he drew materials], a philosopher by nature, who taught that if a man was accused of a crime and was tried and found not guilty, he should be publicly chastised. His reasons were that the man had acted improperly, so much so that he had created suspicion. This would seem to give license to an enemy to work mischief. But the same philosopher had a remedy at hand, and that was, that any man who accused another and failed to prove it by two witnesses should suffer the punishment the other would have suffered had he been proven guilty. After the whipping was over, the Roman officer washed his hands, thereby declaring that the actions of the man had produced his own chastisement. Thus, after Pilate had Jesus scourged, he washed his hands, forever clearing the Roman government of the blood of Christ. The reader must remember that the soldiers who brought Jesus from the court of the High Priest were Jewish soldiers. They were acquainted with the Jewish custom of washing the hands to condemn. Hence, when they saw Pilate wash his hands, they took it for granted that Jesus was going to die. One might say that this would relieve the actors of responsibility in this matter. But if a man seeks to injure me, and I by my sagacity avert the injury he intended and change it into a blessing, would that change the guilty intention of the first party?

We also learn from the Mechilta that the Jewish Commonwealth was divided into districts, such as Palestine, Galilee, Judeah, and so on. Each of these states had its courts and legislatures, presided over by a High Priest. This is the reason we have so many High Priests spoken of in the New Testament history. These states were subdivided into smaller divisions, each of which was presided over by a magistrate who was an officiating priest. If any one reads the Mechilta, he will clearly recognize the [rules of] government of the United States of North America. As the laws of the Jewish nation were all dictated by the God of heaven, we should appreciate them the more.

Then there is the Saphra, in Hebrew ‘corner-stone’ or ‘foundation rock’, which goes to show that all these laws were founded upon God’s word or authority. This is quite an extended work that is full of quotations from the various works of the ancient world. I would love to read this carefully for a year and give extracts to the people. I am sure that this little volume will so stir American scholars that these things will be brought before the reading world. But I would advise whoever does it, not to trust [up] to the [present day] the printed copies of the Jewish rabbis, but go as I did to the original manuscript at Byzantium and get it as it was written by its author.

One more book I must call attention to, that is, the Siphri [or numbers]. This is more of a chronological and biographical account than anything else. It gives the history of great events, and mentions the names of its actors, enumerating the birth, lineage, deaths, as well as all the wise sayings of such men as Abraham, Joshua, Moses, David,

Solomon, and many others. I would like to give many extracts from this work. They would be of deep interest to the American people, as well as of great benefit to the young and rising generation.

There is one extract I have to give. It will be read with great interest by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in America: "Jacob had twelve sons, and when he saw that there was strife and dissatisfaction among them, he went and got him twelve sticks. When he had bound them together with strong bands, he gave them to his eldest son, and asked him to break them. He tried, but could not. Then he gave them to the next, and so on until each one down to the youngest had tried to break them. And when they had all failed, the father took the bundle of sticks and unbundled them. He gave one to the eldest and told him to break it. He did so. And then he gave one to the next, and so on, till all the sticks were broken, and each one had done his part. And Jacob said: Now, my sons, you must learn two lessons from this. The first lesson is, what neither one of you could do, you all combined can do. And the second lesson is, when you are all bound together you cannot be broken!"

Besides these there are the Pesikta [notes] and Midrashim, which are full of interesting items, sermons and extracts of sermons, and wise sayings of great men of all ages, the decisions of the great Sanhedrin on points of law and doctrine, and many other questions of importance. It would be of deep interest to the readers of this day. Now, the reader must bear in mind that these several books, that have come to my attention, are all taken from the Talmud [on the subject of the workings] of the Sanhedrin, and those were made in Jerusalem. These books were compiled by Hillel the Second [more than two centuries] after the destruction of the Holy City, and were so organised that if scrolls were destroyed some might be preserved in these [libraries]. After these, other writings were created to alleviate the needs of the Jews in their dispersed condition, such as the Nagad, Kikhil, Midrash, and so on. But, remember, all these works were compiled by the Jewish priests, based on the original teachings [orally or put on record]. They, of course, would leave out everything that had a tendency to favor the Christian religion. In all such works we need not expect to find anything about Jesus of Nazareth. But this by no means proves that such records are not to be found. We must find the original scrolls, and there we may expect to get at the truth, as the following work will show. Therefore, let the reader read and judge for himself.



### CHAPTER III - ARCHKOVOLUME

#### CONSTANTINE'S LETTER IN REGARD TO HAVING FIFTY COPIES OF THE SCRIPTURES WRITTEN AND BOUND

IT is known that the Roman Emperor, Constantine, who was converted to the Christian religion, had fifty copies of the Scriptures made and placed in the public library for preservation. Some historian has said that they were so large it took two men to open one of them. While in Constantinople I found one of these volumes nicely cased, marked with the Emperor's name and date upon it. To me it was a great curiosity. I got permission with a little baksheesh, as they call money, to look through it. It was written on hierotike [hieratic is an ancient Egyptian and priestly script], which is the finest of parchment, in large, bold, Latin characters, quite easy to read. As far as I read it had many abbreviations of our present Scriptures, but the facts, sense, and sentences are as full, and, if anything, more complete than our English version. I judge it to be about two and a half by four feet square, and two feet thick. It is well bound, with a gold plate, twelve by sixteen inches, on the front, with a cross and a man hanging on the cross, with the inscription, "Jesus, the Son of God, crucified for the sins of the world". If the Revision Committee had examined and published this work, they might have said they were giving the world something new. But so far as we examined we saw nothing essentially different from our present Bible. Constantine's letter is on the first page, which we transcribed.

The historian will remember that in the Life of Constantine [written by Eusebius Pamphili, Bishop of Cæsarea, who served him only a few years] Eusebius writes as follows: "Ever mindful of the welfare of those churches of God, the Emperor addressed me personally in a letter on the means of providing copies of the inspired oracles." His letter, which related to providing copies of the Scriptures for being read in the churches, was to the following purport:

«« Victor Constantine Maximus Augustus to Eusebius:

It happens through the favoring of God our Saviour, that great numbers have united themselves to the most holy church in this city, which is called by my name. It seems, therefore, highly requisite – since the city is rapidly advancing in prosperity in all other respects – that the number of churches should also be increased. Do you, therefore, receive with all readiness my determination on this behalf. I have thought it expedient to instruct your Prudence to order fifty copies of the sacred Scriptures, the provisions and use of which you know to be most needful for the instruction of the churches, to be written on prepared parchment, in a legible manner and in



a commodious and portable form, by transcribers thoroughly practised in their art. The procurator of the diocese has also received instructions by letter from our Clemency to be careful to furnish all things necessary for the preparation of such copies, and it will be for you to take special care that they be completed with as little delay as possible. You have authority, also in virtue of this letter, to use two of the public carriages for their conveyance, by which arrangement the copies, when fairly written, will most easily be forwarded for my personal inspection. One of the deacons of your church may be intrusted with this service, who on his arrival here shall experience my liberality. God preserve you, beloved brother. »»

Now this was done about 327 years after the great questions were started, and only about 270 years after the last apostle had died. Suppose someone should write a book denying that such a man as Washington ever lived, that there never was a revolution of the United States against the King of England, what would people say of him? The children of this country would rise up and show him to be false. Then suppose there never was such a man as Jesus Christ, that he never was born at Bethlehem, that he never had any disciples, that they never organised a Christian Church. And suppose someone would say there was no persecution of the Christian Church for two hundred years, what would you think of a king doing such a thing as making the above-described books? Remember too that nothing was written in those days but the most important affairs of life, because only a few men could write, and the means of writing were limited. Now, the existence of these writings was never denied for 1200 to 1400 years afterwards. Their intent and spirituality may have been denied, but the facts never were. Now what ought we to think of a man who would deny events that occurred 2000 years ago, that were recorded in the records of kings and historical writers, when he had not one single record to prove it? How can he know that such records are false? He would have no history, no records of those days to prove it. And if they were false, isn't it reasonable to think that they would have been proven to be so?



## CHAPTER IV - ARCHKOVOLUME

### JONATHAN's INTERVIEW WITH THE BETHLEHEM SHEPHERDS

#### REPORT BY MELKER, PRIEST OF THE SYNAGOGUE AT BETHLEHEM

JONATHAN, son of Heziel, questions the shepherds and others at Bethlehem in regard to the strange circumstances reported to have occurred there, and reports to this court [the Sanhedrin]. This is an introduction to Melker's Report. (Sanh. 88B-2 by R. Jose)

*Jonathan to the Masters of Israel, Servants of the True God:*

In obedience to your order, I met with two men, who said they were shepherds and were watching their flocks near Bethlehem. They told me that while attending to their sheep, the night being cold and chilly, some of them had made fires to warm themselves, and some of them had laid down and were asleep. That they were awakened by those who were keeping watch with the question: "What does all this mean? Behold, how light it is!" – because when they were aroused it was light as day. But they knew it was not daylight, for it was only the third watch. All at once the air seemed to be filled with human voices, saying: "Glory! Glory! Glory to the most high God!", and: "Happy art thou, Bethlehem, for God hath fulfilled his promise to the fathers. For in thy chambers is born the King that shall rule in righteousness." Their shoutings would rise up in the heavens and then would sink down in mellow strains, and roll along at the foot of the mountains, and die away in the most soft and musical manner they had ever heard. Then it would begin again high up in the heavens, in the very vaults of the sky, and descend in sweet and melodious strains, so that they could not refrain from shouting and weeping at the same time. The light would seem to burst forth high up in the heavens and then descend in softer rays and light up the hills and valleys, making everything more visible than the light of the sun, though it was not so brilliant, but clearer like the brightest moon. I asked them how they felt and asked if they were not afraid. They said at first they were, but after awhile it seemed to calm their spirits, and so fill their hearts with love and tranquillity that they felt more like giving thanks than anything else. They said it was around the whole city. Some of the people were almost scared to death. Some said the world was on fire. Some said the gods were coming down to destroy them. Others said a star had fallen, until Melker the priest came out shouting and clapping his hands, seeming to be frantic with joy. The people all came crowding around him, and he told them that it was the sign that God was coming to fulfil his promise made to their father Abraham. He told us that 1400 years earlier, God had appeared

to Abraham, and He told him to put all Israel under bonds, sacred bonds of obedience. If they would be faithful, he would give them a Saviour to redeem them from sin, and that he would give them eternal life, and that they should hunger no more, that the time of their suffering should cease forever. The sign of his coming would be that light would shine from on high, and the angels would announce his coming, and their voices should be heard in the city, and the people should rejoice. A virgin that was pure should travail in pain and bring forth her first born. That he should rule all flesh by sanctifying it and making it obedient. After Melker had addressed the people in a loud voice, he and all the elderly Jews went into the synagogue and remained there praising God and giving thanks.

I went to see Melker, who related to me much the same as the shepherds had reported. He told me that he had lived in India, and that his father had been priest at Antioch; that he had studied the sacred scrolls of God all his life, and that he knew from signs given, that the time had come for God to visit and save the Jews from Roman oppression and from their sins. As evidence he showed me many quotations on the tripod respecting the matter.

He said that next day three strangers from a great distance called on him, and they went in search of this young child. And they found him and his mother in the mouth of the cave, where there was a shed projecting out for the sheltering of sheep. That his mother was married to a man named Joseph, and she related to them the history of her child, saying that an angel had visited her and told her that she should have a son, and she should call him Jesus, for he should redeem his people from their sins; and he [Melker] should call her blessed forever more.

Whether this is true or not remains to be proven in future. There have been so many impostors in the world, so many babes born under pretended miracles, and all have proven to be a failure. This one may be false too, as this woman was only wishing to hide her shame or court the favor of the Jews.

I am informed that she will be tried by our law, and, if she can give no better evidence of her virtue than she has given to Melker, she will be stoned according to our law, although, as Melker says, there never has been a case before with such apparent divine manifestations as were seen on this occasion. In the past, in various instances, virgins have pretended to be with child by the Holy Ghost, but at the time of their delivery there was no light from the heavens, and no angels talking among the clouds and declaring that this was the King of the Jews. And, as to the truth of these things, the whole of the people of Bethlehem testify to having seen it, and the Roman guard also came out and asked what it meant, and they showed by their actions that they were very much alarmed. These things, Melker says, are all declared in the Scriptures to be the sign of his coming. Melker is a man of great learning and well versed in the prophecies, and he sends you this letter, referring to those prophecies.

Report by Melker, Priest of the Synagogue of Bethlehem, to the Higher Sanhedrin of the Jews at Jerusalem:

HOLY MASTERS OF ISRAEL: I, your servant, would like to call your attention to the words of the prophet in regard to the forerunner, as well as to the rise of the leader of a great and mighty nation, wherein should dwell the true principles of righteousness, being the leader of the actual formation of a national domain of God upon earth. As evidence of the fact, the vision and affliction that befell Zacharias of late (the father of John the Baptist) is sufficient to convince all men of the advent of some great event: this babe of Elisabeth is the beginning of better times.

What has occurred here in the last few days, as Jonathan informs you, forever settles the question that the day of our redemption is drawing nigh. There are three sections in my exposition:

- 1) The general survey; the original foundation and destiny of Man in his single state; the proto-evangelium; the full development of mankind; the promises to the fathers of the covenant-people; Judah, the leader tribe.
- 2) The Mosaic law and Mosaic outlook; the prophecy of Baalam.
- 3) The Anointed One [Christ means the Anointed One]; and the prophets of the last exile: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; Malachi's prophecy of the forerunner of the Lord.

Now, noble masters of Israel, if you refer to several sections of the divine word, you will not fail to see that all that has been spoken of by the prophets, in regard to the works of God upon earth, has been fulfilled in the last few days in the two events. I mean the birth of the child of Elisabeth [to be known as John the Baptist], and that of Mary of Bethlehem.

The unlimited freedom that some men take with these holy writings of God, as to the above prophecy, subjects us to the severest criticism. It is, however, most satisfactory to see and hear that the divine grandeur and authority of the sacred prophecies are in no way dependent on the solution of carnal critics, but rest on an inward light shining everywhere out of the bosom of a profound organic unity and an interconnected relation with a consistent and unified teleology [teleology studies phenomena in terms of the purpose they serve]. This [unity of purpose] overleaps all times, the historical present as well as the past. All the past brought to light in these two events have just transpired [the events of the birth of the child of Elisabeth and that of the child of Mary of Bethlehem]. Indeed, all past time is blending with the present horizon, and the works of God in ages past are just beginning to develop themselves at this particular time. The present scenes are bringing us close on to God's ways upon earth. While we reverence these men of God we should not misquote their language. Take, for instance Isaiah 3, where he prophesies about

the captive Israelites as a way of giving consolation to the captive. While one of his words refers to their future condition and the reason therefor, the other is sweet in consolation of the Israelites being in this state of captivity, and so they are full of blessed promises for the future.

But let the spirit of prophecy bear us on with the prophet into future time, far beyond the kingdoms of this world into a glorious future, regardless of the Roman, Babylonian, or even the Maccabean rule or rulers, but never forgetting that the prophet is one who is divinely inspired and is called, commissioned and qualified to declare the will as well as the knowledge of God. Yes, he is a seer. His prophecy is of the nature of a vision, involving and enveloping all the faculties of the soul, and placing the prophet in the attitude to God of being outside the body and independent of it. Yea, far better without the body than with it, for the further the soul gets from the body the more active it becomes. This fact is demonstrated in our dreams. The vivid powers of the soul are much more active during dreams than at any other time. The perception is clearer and the sensitive faculties are much more alive when asleep than when awake. We see this verified in a someone who is dying. His eyes are usually brighter, his mind is clearer, his soul freer and less selfish, as he passes on and nears the eternal state.

So is the prophet. He becomes so personal with God that he uses the personalities with seeming presumption – while it is the indwelling power of God's spirit inflating the soul and setting the tongue on fire. So was the moving language of the words to which you were referred. It seems to me, those men of God saw distinctly the gathering light, they saw the travailing of the virgin, they saw the helpless infant in the sheep-trough, they heard the mighty chanting of the heavenly host, they saw the ambition of human nature in the Roman soldiery aiming to destroy the child's life. In that infant they saw human nature in its fallen and helpless condition, and it appears as if they witnessed the advance of that infant into perfect manhood. In becoming the theme of this world, his advancing nature will triumph over all. As he does escape the Roman authority in his day, so will he finally triumph over all the world, and even death itself shall be destroyed.

We, as Jews, place too much confidence in the outward appearance. While the idea we get of the Kingdom of Heaven is all of a carnal nature, consisting of forms and ceremonies, the prophecies referred to, and many other passages that I could mention, all go to show that the Kingdom of God is to begin within us, in the inner life, and rule from there. From that inner nature all outward actions are to flow in conformity with the revealed and written teachings and commands of God. So is the spirit of prophecy. While it uses the natural organs of speech, it at the same time controls all the faculties of life, producing sometimes a real ecstasy, not mechanical or loss of conscious-

ness, though cut off at that time from external relations. He is thus circumscribed to speak, as did Balaam, the words of God with human life. This is to be held by us Jews as of the first and greatest importance, and we are to remember that his prophecy has the same reference to the future as it does to the past, and pertains to the whole empire of mankind. While it specifies individuals and nations, it often has reference to doctrines and principles. In this light, Israel is the result of prophecy, as a nation with her religious teachings. So is this virgin's babe born to be a ruler of all nations of the world. The Torah itself goes back to prophecy. Every prophet thereafter stands on the Torah, and on this rests all prophecy pronouncing condemnation on the disobedient and blessings on the faithful. It was on this principle that the Covenant of Inheritance was made with Abraham, and, in reality, so made with David. Thus all the promises, political, ethical, judicial, and ritual, rest on the Torah. In short, the whole government [of the Kingdom of God] has to find its authority in the prophetic vision as set forth by the commands of God, meant to regulate human life commencing in the inner life and working outwardly, until the outward is like the inward, and thus advancing on from individuals to nations. The messianic prophecy has no other justification than this. On this rests our society [qahal] and on this rests the theocracy. On this rests the glory of the future Kingdom of God upon earth.

The whole chain of prophecy is already fulfilled in this babe, but its development is only commencing. He will abolish the old cultus forever, but with humankind it will develop commensurate with time itself. There are many types in the shadow, in the plant, in the animal. Every time the Romans celebrated a triumph on the Tiber it shadowed forth the coming Cæsar. So, every suffering of David or lamentation of Job, or glory of Solomon – yea, every wail of human sorrow, every throe of human grief, every dying sigh, every failing bitter tear – is a type, a prophecy of the coming King of the Jews and the Saviour of the world. Israel stands as a common factor at every great epoch of history. The shading of the colors of the prophetic painting does not obliterate the literal fulfilment of Israel's more glorious future in the Kingdom of God. Her historic calling to mediate salvation to the nations is not ended with this newcomer on the stage of earthly life. The prophecy is eschatological, refining the inner life as well as shaping the outer in conformity to good laws. Looking also to the end of time and its great importance to us, it has something to teach, and we have something to learn. Along the ages past all the great, good, and happy, have first learned their duties, and have then performed them. And thus for thousands of years Israel has stood, while the hope never died in the Hebrew heart, and it was the only appointed source of preserved knowledge of the true God. At this present day she stands as the great factor and centre around, to which all the nations of the earth must come for instruction to guide them, that they may become better and happier.



The sacred scrolls, which we Jews received from God by the hand of Moses are the only hope of the world. If lost to humankind, it would be worse than putting out the sun, moon, and all the stars of night, for this would be a loss of sacred light to the souls of men. When we consider the surroundings, there never has been a time more propitious than the present one for the establishment of the true religion, and it seems, by reviewing our history for hundreds of years past, that this is the time for the ushering in of the true Kingdom of God. The nations of the earth that have been given to idolatry are growing tired of placing confidence in and depending on gods that do not help them in the hour of danger. They are now wanting a God that can and will answer their calls.

King Herod sent for me the other day. After I related to him of the God of the Jews and his works, of the many and mighty deeds He performed for our fathers and for us as a nation, he seemed to think that if there was such a God as we profess, it would be far better to depend on Him than on the kind of gods the Romans had made of timber, stone and iron, for even the gods of gold were powerless. He said that if he could know that this babe, that was declared by the angels, was such a God as the one that saved the Israelites in the Red Sea, and saved Daniel and those three from the fearful heat of fire, he would have pursued quite a different course toward Him. He had been under the impression that He came to drive the Romans from their possessions, and wanted to reign as a monarch instead of Cæsar. I find this to be the general feeling throughout the world, so far as I can hear, that the people want and are ready to receive a God who can demonstrate by his life that He is such a God, a God that the race of men can depend on in times of trouble. If He can show such power to his friends, He will be feared by his enemies, and thus become universally obeyed by all the nations of the world. And this, I fear, is going to be a trouble with our nation: our people are going to look to 'the one sent' [Shiloh] as a temporal deliverer, and will aim to circumscribe Him to the Jews alone. And when his actions begin to flow out to all the inhabitants of the world in love and charity, as is most certainly shown forth in chapter 9 of the holy prophet (Jer. 9:24-25), then I fear the Jews will reject Him, and, in fact, we are warned of that already in the third chapter of Jeremiah's word. To avoid this, Israel must be taught that the prophecy of Isaiah does not stop with the Babylonian Captivity and return to the Kingdom of Heaven, and that Ezekiel's wheels [of ch. 1 and 10] do not whirl politically or spiritually in heaven, but upon earth, and have reference to earthly revolutions or changes, and show the bringing to pass of the great events of which this of Bethlehem is the grandest of all.

Neither is the prophetic outlook of Daniel to be confined to the shade of the Maccabean wall of the Jewish conquest, nor are these great questions to be decided by our vain attempts to find out what the prophet meant or what he might have understood himself. Instead, the answers evolve from the unity, totality and organic connection of

the whole body of [Biblical] prophecy, which refer to the kingdom of this world becoming subject to the Kingdom of the Saviour over all men. We, as Jews, are the only people that God has entrusted with these great questions, and, of course, the world will look to and expect us to give the answers. As we are entrusted with these things, God will hold us responsible if we fail to give the true light on this topic. Up to the present time, I am fearful the Jews, as a nation, are much divided, and perhaps as much mistaken, regarding the nature of God's [future] works, the same as with any other people. I have found by conversing with the Romans, Greeks and others, that all their understanding of things pertaining to the advent of 'the Redeemer' has been obtained from the Jews themselves, either directly or indirectly. It was because of them that Herod got the idea of Him being a temporal king, who would rule and reign by the might of carnal weapons. Yet, if we consult the spiritual import of the prophets, his office is to blend all nations in one common brotherhood, love being established in the place of [rules of] law. In that situation the heart of each one will throb with love to all other hearts. Under this reign will rule a universal peace. Wherever people meet one another they will meet as friends. What else could the prophet have meant [Isaiah 2], where he shows that this king shall destroy all carnal weapons and convert them to something useful? The Redeemer thus becomes the active worker in doing good to 'all men on earth', teaching them to do good to one another.

By reading all the scrolls of God we find that the unity and totality of all the prophets go to bear us out in this idea, and all have reference to this 'babe of Bethlehem'. If we consult them as to the time [when this was going to happen], the revolutions of Ezekiel's wheels [of ch. 1 and 10] show plainly that the revolutions of the different governments of the world converge at our time. Next, let's consult them in regard to the individuals connected with this great event. These are pointed out as the barren wife of Zacharias [the mother of John the Baptist]. Also the place has been pointed out and named. Then the light and the appearing of the angels have all been set forth, and also the opposition of the Romans was declared. Now, I ask the High Court of the living God to look well on these things and tell us how men that lived in different ages of the world, that lived in different portions of the country, men that never knew each other, men that were not prophesying for a party, men that had no personal interest in the subject, men that put themselves in jeopardy – and some of them lost their lives on account of having uttered these prophecies – how could they all point out the place, the time, and the names of the parties involved so plain and clear, if it was not revealed to them and ordained by God himself? I understand that the Romans and some of the priests have been saying that Zacharias is a hypocrite, and Mary a bad woman. Such might be the case so far as man is able to judge, but who, I ask, can forge such truth as these prophecies and make them come true? Or who can cause light to descend from the heavens

and the angels come down and make the declaration that this newborn is the Son of God, King of the Jews?

Noble Masters of the Sanhedrin, I was not alone. I am not the only witness of these events. Most people of Bethlehem saw them and heard them as I did. I would say to you, if this is not the King of the Jews, we need not look for any other. For every line of prophecy has been most completely fulfilled in Him. If he does not appear and save his own people, I shall despair of ever being released and I shall then believe that we have misinterpreted the meaning of all the prophets. But I feel so sure that this is 'Him' that I shall wait in expectation and with much anxiety [for what the future may bring], and I have no fears of any harm befalling Him. All the Romans in the world cannot harm Him. Although Herod may rage and destroy all the infants in the world, the same angels that attended his birth will watch over Him through life. The Romans have to contend with the same God that Pharaoh did, and they will meet with similar defeat.



**CHAPTER V - ARCHKOVOLUME**

**THE PSEUDO-GAMALIEL**

**GAMALIEL's INTERVIEW**

**WITH JOSEPH AND MARY AND OTHERS**

**CONCERNING JESUS**

THIS so-called interview, found in the Sophia Mosque at Constantinople, is ascribed to Gamaliel (in the recorded teachings of the Jews, 27B). As was discovered in the year 2008 this happens to be a fraud, a so-called 'Pseudo-Gamaliel', that must have been written very soon after Jesus' execution. This piece of paper is actually an outrage and a scandal with the sole object to discredit our beloved Lord and Saviour. It was made to appear that Gamaliel the Elder had been asked by the Sanhedrin to interrogate Joseph and Mary in regard to their child Jesus, now 26 years of age.

It runs as follows:

I found Joseph and Mary in the city of Mecca, in the land of Ammon or Moab. But I did not find Jesus. When I went to the place where I was told he was, he happened to be somewhere else. And thus I followed him from place to place, until I despaired of finding him at all. Whether he knew that I was in search of him and tried to escape me, I cannot tell, though I think it most likely it was the former reason, for his mother says he is bashful and shuns company.

Joseph is a carpenter. He is very tall and ugly. His hair looks as though it might have been dark auburn when young. His eyes are gray and vicious. He is anything but prepossessing in his appearance, and he is as gross and glum as he looks. He is but a poor talker, and it seems that yes and no are the depth of his mind. I am convinced that he is very disagreeable to his family. His children look very much like him, and upon the whole I should call them a third-rate family. I asked him who were his parents. He said his father's name was Jacob, and his grandfather's was Matthew. He did not like to talk on the subject. He is very jealous. I told him that we had heard that he had had a vision, and that I was sent to ascertain the facts of the case. He said he did not call it a vision, he called it a dream. He said after he and Mary had agreed to marry, it seemed that something told him that Mary was with child. He said that he did not know whether he was asleep or awake, but it made such an impression on his mind that he concluded to have nothing more to do with her. While he was working one day under a shed, all at once a man in snowy white stood by his side and told him not to doubt the virtue of Mary, for she was holy before the Lord, that the child conceived in her was not by man, but by the Holy Ghost, and that the child would be free from human passions. In order to be like this he must – that is, his humanity must be of the extract of almah (that is the Hebrew word for virgin). As

such he might endure all things and not resist, and thus fulfill the demands of prophecy. He said the angel told him that this child would be great and rule all the kingdoms of this world. He said that this child should set up a new kingdom wherein should dwell righteousness and peace, and that the kingdoms of this world which oppose him would be utterly destroyed by God.

I asked: "How could a virgin conceive of herself without the germination of the male?" He said: "This is the work of God. He has brought to life the womb of Elisabeth, so she conceived and had a son in her old age, who is destined to go before and tell the people of the coming of this king." Joseph continued: "After telling me all these things, the man in white disappeared like the melting down of a light. I then went and told Mary what had occurred, and she told me that the same angel, or one like him, had appeared to her and had told the same things. So I married Mary, thinking that if what the angel had told us was true, it would be greatly to our advantage. But I am fearful we are mistaken. Jesus seems to take no interest in us, nor anything else much. I call him lazy and careless. I do not think he will ever amount to much, much less be a king. If this is going to happen, he must do a great deal better than he has been doing." I asked him how long it took after that conversation with the angel before the child was born. He said he did not know exactly, but he thought it was seven or eight months. I asked where they were at the time. He said in Bethlehem, and went on: "The Roman commander had given orders for all the Jews to present themselves on a certain day to be enrolled as taxpayers. He and Mary went to Bethlehem as the nearest place of enrollment and while there, this babe was born." I asked if anything strange occurred that night. He said: "People were much excited, but I was so tired that I had gone to sleep and saw nothing. Toward day several priests came in to see us and the babe, and gave many presents. The news got circulated that this child was to be King of the Jews. It created so much excitement that I took the child and his mother and went to Moab for protection, for fear the Romans would kill the child to keep it from being a rival to the Romans."

I discovered that all of Joseph's ideas were of a selfish kind. All he thought of was himself. Mary is altogether a different type. She is too noble to be the wife of such a man. She seems to be about forty or forty-five years of age, abounds with a cheerful and happy spirit and is full of happy fancies. She is fair to see, rather fleshy, has soft and innocent-looking eyes, and seems to be a naturally good woman. I asked her who her parents were, and she said her father's name was Eli, and her mother's name was Anna. Her grandmother's name was Pennel [Phanuel], a widow of the tribe of Asher, of great renown. I asked her if Jesus was the son of Joseph. She said he was not.

I asked her to relate the circumstances of the child's history. She said that one day while she was grinding some meal there appeared at the

door a stranger in shining raiment, which shone as bright as the light. She was very much alarmed by his presence, and trembled like a leaf. But all her fears were calmed when he spoke to her, for he said: "Mary, thou art loved by the Lord and He has sent me to tell thee that thou shalt have a child, that this child shall be great and rule all the nations of the world." She continued: "I immediately thought of my engagement to Joseph, and supposed that was the way the child was to come, but he astonished me the more when he told that cousin Elisabeth had conceived and would bear a son, whose name was to be John. My son was to be called Jesus. This caused me to remember that Zacharias had seen a vision and disputed with the angel, and for that he was struck with dumbness, so that he could no longer hold the priest's office. I asked the messenger if Joseph knew anything of the matter. He said that he told Joseph that I was to have a child by command of the Holy Ghost, and that he was to redeem his people from their sins, and was to reign over the whole world. That every man should confess to him, and that he should rule over all the kings of the earth." I asked her how she knew that it was an angel, and she said he told her so, and she knew for sure that he was an angel by the way he came and went. I asked her to describe how he left her, and she said that he seemed to melt away like the extinguishing of a light. I asked if she knew anything of John the Baptist. She said that he lived in the mountains of Judeah, for that was the last she had heard. I asked if John and Jesus were acquainted, or did meet each other. She said she did not think they met.

I asked her whether she was almah (virgin) at the time this angel, as she called him, visited her. She said she was, that she had never showed to a man, nor was known by any man [having intercourse]. I asked her if she afterwards maintained her fourchette [virginity]. After making her and Joseph understand what I meant, they both said she had, and Joseph said this was the way he had of testing her virtue. I asked her if she knew when conception took place. She said she did not. I asked her if she was in any pain in bearing or in delivering this child. She said: "None of any consequence."

I asked her if Jesus was healthy and asked to give a description of his life. She said he was in perfect health, that she never heard him complain of any pain or dissatisfaction; his food always agreed with him; he would eat anything set before him, and if anyone complained he used to say he thought it good enough, much better than we deserve. She said Joseph was a little hard to please, but this boy had answered him so often and then his answers were so mild and suitable, that he had almost exasperated him of finding fault with him. She said that he settled all the disputes of the family, no matter the subject or who it was, just one word from him closed all mouths. What gave him such power was that his words were always unpretending and spoken as though they were not intended as a rebuke, but merely as a decision. I asked her if she had ever seen him angry or irritated. She said she had seen him apparently vexed and grieved at

the disputes and follies of others, but had never seen him angry. I asked her if he had any worldly aspirations for money or wealth, or a great name, or delighted in fine dress like most of the youth. She said that when there was something that vexed her, he seemed to be uninterested as concerns himself. He did not care about the way he was dressed, or whether the family got along well or was ill. It was all alike to him. She said, she once talked to him about it, and he would look at her a little grieved and say: "Woman – for such he always called me – you do not know who I am." Indeed, she said, he takes so little interest in the things of the world and the great questions of the day, that they were beginning to despair of him ever amounting to much – much less be a king, as the angel said he would be. If so, he would have to act very differently from the way he was acting then and now. I told her that the Jewish doctors contend that the amorous disposition is peculiar to the male. I asked her if she had ever seen in the private life of Jesus any signs of such a disposition. She said she had not. I asked if she saw in him any particular fondness for female company. She said she had not, if anything, rather to the contrary. That the young bethaul (young women) were all very fond of him and were always seeking his company, and yet he did not seem to care. If they appeared too fond of him, he treated them almost with scorn. He would often get up and leave them, and wander away and spend his time in meditation and prayer. He is perfectly ascetic in how he leads his life. "When I see how the people like to be with him and ask him questions, and both men and women seem to take such delight with his answers, it almost vexes me. They say that there is a young woman in Bethany whom he intends to marry, but unless he greatly changes his behaviour he will never be qualified to have a family of his own. But I do not believe the gossip. As to me, he never seems to care anything about women when he is in my presence."

Thus it seems that Joseph and Mary have both lost all confidence in him becoming anything. They seem to think that the Sanhedrin should do something for him to get him out and let him show himself to the people. I tried to console them by telling that my understanding of the prophecy was that he should come to the high priesthood first, and there work in the spiritual dominion of the heart, and when he would have brought about a unity of heart and oneness of aim, it would be easy enough to establish his political claims. As concerns all those who would not willingly submit to him, it would be an easy matter, with the sword of Joshua or Gideon, to bring them under his control.

It seems to me that his parents' ideas are of a selfish character, that they care nothing about the Jewish government nor the Roman oppression. All they think of is self-exaltation. They try to personally benefit from their son's greatness. But I told them they were mistaken, that the building up of the Kingdom of Heaven will not to be done by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. It would not be fitting to use carnal weapons to that end, nor to expect carnal



pleasures to be derived therefrom. Furthermore, I said that it was not my understanding of the prophecy that this king was to use such weapons either for himself or for the benefit of a party, but for the good of all men. His dominion will be universal and of a spiritual character. He is to be sent to the lost and not to the found.

His parents told me of an old man who lived on the road to Bethany who had once been a priest, a man of great learning and well skilled in the laws and prophets. Jesus was often there, reading the law and prophets together. His name is Massalian. I might have found Jesus there. But he was not there. Massalian said, Jesus was often in Bethany with a young family, and he thought there was some kind of love affair between him and one of the girls. I asked if he had seen anything like a courtship between them. He said he had not, but inferred it from their intimacy and from the fondness on the woman's part, as well as from the laws of nature, that such would be the case.

I asked him to give me an outline of Jesus' character. He said that he was a young man of the finest thought and feeling, a thing he had never seen in his life. That he was most apt in his answers and found solutions to difficult problems unlike any man of his age. Never had he seen this before. That his answers seem to give more universal satisfaction, so much so that the oldest philosopher would not dispute with him, or in any manner join issue with him, or ask him a question for a second time. I asked Massalian if he had taught him to read and explain the law and the prophets. He said his mother told that he had always known how to read the law [thora], that his mind seemed to have mastered it as from the very beginning. He gives a deeper insight in his teachings or talks as concerns the laws of nature and the relation of a man to his fellow man, by which he inspires mutual love and the strengthening of the common trust in society. On another plane he manages to set men right with the laws of nature. By his presentation he turns nature into a great law-book full of illustrations, showing that every bush is a flame, every rock a fountain of water, every star a pillar of fire, and every cloud the one that leads to God. He makes all nature preach the doctrine of trust in the divine fatherhood. He speaks of the lilies as pledges of God's care, and points to the fowls as evidence of his watchfulness over human affairs. Who can measure the distance between God and a flower of the field? What connection is there between man and the lily? By such illustrations he creates a solicitude in someone that seems to awe him into reverence, who then becomes attracted toward heavenly thought, feeling to be in the presence of the Superior Being. By his manner of speaking someone is brought to feel that he is in the near presence of God, of whom he says: "How much more He is your father!" The plane is one, though the intermediate points are immeasurably distant from each other. Thus by beginning with a flower, he reasons upward to the absolute, and then descends and teaches lessons of trust in a loving father. The lessons of trust in God reassure the anxious listener and create an appetite that makes him long for more. It often happens,

after he has brought his listeners to the highest point of enthusiasm, that he suddenly breaks off and leaves his company as though he cares nothing for them. Jesus in his exposition brings all these illustrations to the foreground to make someone feel nearness to his kindred, a man. He also teaches someone's relation to and dependence upon God.

In spite that his approach has certain merits, I don't think it is the most efficient. He teaches that men and the flowers and birds drink from the same fountain and are fed by the same table, yet at the same time he seems to do everything to arise suspicion and prejudice. We are watching him to see his divine mission commence, and yet, he is continually frustrating our expectations as well as mocking our common sense and desires. When a man separates himself from the people, both as regards doctrine and discipline, he takes a very great risk on his part, especially when he confines God to one channel that happens to be his own fabrication. A person that assumes these responsible positions ought to have vast resources from which to draw, or he will sink in the whirlpool his own impertinence created. We learn from Jesus' teachings or sermons that God is spirit, and God is father. It appears that Jesus' words sound so much like the teachings of Hillel or Shammai that I have to call them 'teachings', though he had no particular scholars [who educated him]. He says that these two truths are the only ones one should know. Then he illustrates this to the parents, and inquires what they would do for their children. He was telling some mothers a story of a mother starving herself to feed her child, and then applied it to God as our father. When out of joy they began to shout, Jesus got up and left the house, apparently in disgust...

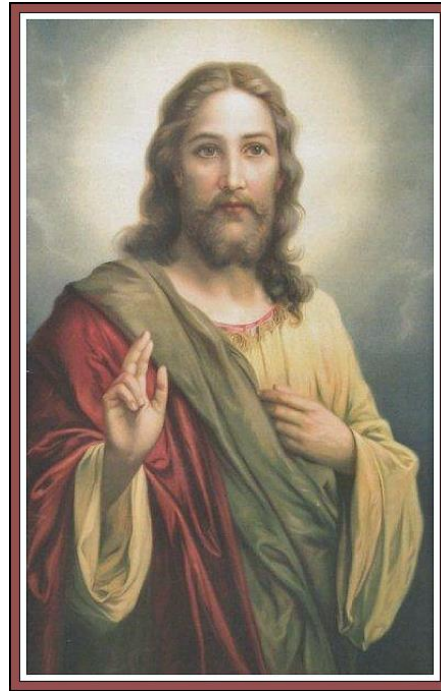
Massalian says he is tempted at times to become impatient with Jesus as he devotes so much time to details. It seems almost a waste of time for a man who came to save the world that is suffering from some special kind of illness. He thinks he could improve Jesus' manners of conduct. Why does not he speak one word and remove every sick patient from his sickbed at the same hour? What a triumph this would be! I asked him if Jesus had healed anyone. He said not as yet, but if he is to be King of the Jews, he is destined to heal all nations, and why not do it all at once? If he would, there would be nothing more required to establish his kingship. But I [Gamaliel] said to him: "Is it not equally so with God's creative power? See what time and labor it takes to bring forth a grain of corn. Why not have caused the earth to bring forth every month instead of every year? The Messiah is talking in defence of his [heavenly] Father. The people must first learn to love and obey the Father before they can reverence the Son." "Yes", Massalian said, "the God that Jesus represents is one that the people might love and venerate. He is a God of love and has no bloody designs to execute even a bad man, provided he ceases his evil ways."

“It should be noted that in all of all of Jesus’ expositions there are manifest references to the future. Many of his statements were like a sealed letter – not to be opened but by time. A grain of mustard is meant to result in a large tree. All his ideas refer to the future, like the parent helping the child with his burden of today, by telling of the blessings of tomorrow, and by making today the seed-corn of tomorrow, keeping the action of today under moral control by making tomorrow the day of judgement. He stated further that Jesus was a young man who was the best judge of human nature he had ever seen, that he thought at times he was able to know the thoughts of people and expose their bad inclinations. While he had all these advantages of life, he seemed not to care for them nor to use them abusively. He seems to like each person as well as another, so much so that his own parents have become disgusted with him and have almost cast him off. But Jesus has such a peculiar temperament that it seems he does not care, and is as well satisfied with one as another. He said that Jesus appears to be fond of Mary [of Magdalen] and Martha [her sister], who live at Bethany, that probably I might find him there.

Massalian is a man of very deep thought and most profound judgement. All his life he studied the Scriptures. He, too, is a good judge of human nature, and he is satisfied with the idea that Jesus is the Messiah. He said that Jesus seems to understand the prophecies by intuition. I asked him where Jesus taught to read the prophecies. He said that his mother told him that Jesus could read from the very beginning, that no one had ever taught him to read. He said that he (Massalian), when making quotations from the prophets, was sometimes mistaken or it was that his memory failed him. But each time Jesus could correct him without having to look in the scroll. Sometimes Massalian felt sure Jesus was mistaken, but never in a single instance he proved wrong.

I asked to describe him as a person, so that I might recognize him if I met him. He said: If you ever meet him you will know. While he is nothing but a man, there is something about him that distinguishes him from everyone else. He is the picture of his mother, only he has not her smooth, round face. His hair is a little more golden than hers, though it is as much from sunburn as anything else. He is tall and his shoulders are a little drooped. His visage is thin and of a swarthy complexion, though this is from exposure to the sun. His eyes are large and a soft blue, and rather dull and heavy. The lashes are long, and his eyebrows very large. His nose is that of a Jew. In fact, he reminds me of an old-fashioned Jew in every sense of the word. He is not a great talker, unless there is something brought up about heaven and divine things. Then his tongue moves glibly and his eyes light up with a peculiar brilliancy. Though there is this peculiarity about Jesus, he never argues a question, he never disputes. He will

commence and state facts, and they are on such a solid basis that nobody will have the boldness to dispute them. Though he has such mastership of judgment, he takes no pride in confuting his opponents, but always seems to be sorry for them. I have seen him attacked by the scribes and doctors of the law, and they seemed like little children learning their lessons under a master. His strongest points are in the spiritual portent of the law and the intentions of the prophets. Young people tried to get him to take a class of them and teach them, but he utterly refused. This Jew is convinced that he is the Messiah of the world.



I went from there to Bethany, but Jesus was not there. They said he and Lazarus were away, they could not tell where. I went and saw Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, and had a long talk with them. They are very pleasant and nice young maids, and Mary is quite handsome. I teased her about Jesus, but they both denied that Jesus was anything like a lover. He was only a friend, though this is so common for young maids, I did not know whether to believe them or not, until I told them my real business. And when I told them that this was the same person that was born of the virgin in Bethlehem some 26 years earlier, and that his mother had told me all the facts in the case, they seemed deeply interested. They then told me upon their word of honor that Jesus never talked or even hinted to either one of them on the subject of marriage. Martha blushed, and said she wished he had. If he was to be a king, she would like to be queen. I asked them if they had ever seen him in the company of young virgins. They said they had not. I asked them if they had heard him talk about young girls, or if he sought their company more than that of men, and they both declared they had not. They were very much surprised that he did not. I asked them what he talked about when in their company. They said he was not much in their company. That he and their brother would go upon the house-top and stay there half the night, and sometimes all night, talking and arguing points of interest to both of them. Mary said she had often gone near, so she could listen to them, for she loved to hear him talk – he was so mild and unpretending, and then was so intelligent that he was different from any other young man she had ever seen. I asked them about their brother's opinion of him. They said he thought there never was such a man on earth. He thought him to be one of God's prophets. He said that when they are out in the mountains, as they are most often, Jesus

tells all about the flowers, the trees and the rocks. Jesus talks about any subject. None of the wild animals are afraid of him. Lazarus says that often the stag and the wolf will come and stand in front of Jesus who strikes their manes, and it seems they are almost loath to go away from him. Also, no poisonous serpent will offer to hiss at him. Their brother thinks he is perfectly safe when Jesus joins him. I asked them if he had ever told their brother anything about himself. They said if he had told such things to their brother, he had not told them.

Now, Masters of Israel, after having investigated this matter, after tracing Jesus from his conception to the present time, after obtaining all the information that is to be had on this important subject, getting it from those who are more likely to tell the truth from the fact they are disinterested persons, and then taking a prophetic as well as a historical view of the subject, I have come to the conclusion that this is the Messiah we are looking for. And as a reason for my conclusion, I will call your attention to the following facts: first to the prophecy of Isaiah 7: "And he said, Hear now, saith the Lord. Oh, house of David, is it a small thing for you? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name God with men. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good, for before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good the land that God abhorrest shall be forsaken of her king." Chapter 8: "Bind the testimony, seal the law among his disciples, the Lord will hide his face from the house of Jacob and he will look for Him." Here is a literal fulfillment of this word of the Most High God, so clear and plain that none may be mistaken. And also Jeremiah 31: "Turn, oh virgin, to thy people, for the hand of the Lord is upon thee, for the Lord shall create a new thing in the earth: a woman shall compass a man." Here again are set forth the same things that Isaiah speaks of, and the same things that I have learned from Mary. Micah 5: "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, thou art little among the thousands of Judah. Out of thee shall come forth unto me him who shall rule my people. He is from everlasting. And I will give them up until the time she travaileth to bring forth my first born, that he may rule all people."

Here we have the city, the virgin, the office, his manner of life, the seeking of him by the Sanhedrin. All these things are under our eyes as full and complete as I now write them, who have all this testimony given in this letter. How can we as a people dispute these things? In Genesis 49, making reference to the history that is now upon us, the writer says: "A captive shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawmaker from him, until Shiloh comes, and gather his people between his feet, and keep them forever."



## CHAPTER VI - ARCHKOVOLUME

### THE APOLOGY OF CAIAPHAS

—

**Originally called: The Report of Caiaphas sent  
to the Sanhedrin concerning the Execution of Jesus**

—

RECORDS OF THE JERUSALEM SANHEDRIN  
BY ELIEZEK HYKAN

TAKEN IN CONSTANTINOPLE, OCTOBER 16, 1883.  
In the recorded teachings of the Jews, 24B.

*Caiaphas, Priest of the Most High, to the Masters of Israel,  
Greetings!*

In obedience to your demands for a reason for my action in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, and in defense of my conduct, I beg leave to submit the following for your consideration: I would assure you that it was not on account of personal malice, envy, or hate, that existed in my own nature, nor for the want of a willingness upon my part to conform to the Jewish law in its strictest sense. I had but very little personal knowledge of the Nazarene. The most I knew of this man was from outside sources. Nor was it because he claimed to be King of the Jews, nor because he said he was the Son of God – I would that he were – nor because he prophesied or ignored the Holy Temple. No, nor all of these combined. There is a cause, and a more weighty matter, back of all these things that controlled my action in the matter. Therefore, I hope you will investigate strictly on legal principles the reasons that I may give.

That you may be in a position to see and weigh the question fully, and remember the responsibility that rests upon me according to the laws of our nation, I will ask you to go back with me to the chronicles of our history as a people. First, our faith is pledged to one living and true God, this God being indescribable, unchangeable, incomprehensible, and, of course, unnameable. But yet in our daily communications with, and our applications to Him, He has been pleased to give us his name, or his several names, according to his relations to us, and they are found nowhere but in the Ark of his Holy Temple – there where He presents to us his strength and power. He calls himself ‘Eloi’, which means almighty in strength, that is, He can do what He wants without effort, doing the greatest thing as easy as the least. This makes Him different from all beings. In his Holy Ark He records himself as ‘Eloah’, which means existence without beginning, and no contingency as to his end. Again, He records himself as ‘Ha-Elion’ [the Most High], which means unchangeable, that is, nothing but his own will can change Him. Again, He records his name ‘Yah’,

which means knowledge that comprehends without being comprehended. Again, his name is written 'Adonai', which means complete and free. Combining the several names we have the concept of Yahweh, the Hebrew God. A man never can go wrong while pronouncing this name in its 'comprehensive sense'. This is where the Zealots, the Sadducees, and Essenes had their origin. It is the want of being able to pronounce this name in its comprehensive sense that causes so much dissension among us Jews. Jesus could pronounce this name, but he stole it out of the Temple as I am creditably informed.

But the object in calling your attention to pronouncing this name, with all its bearings, may be seen if we turn to the third bible book [Leviticus], wherein is the special order given by our God to Moses that we should offer the bullock, the ram, the flour and oil, and the people should fast seven days, and this should be 'kaphar' or atonement for the sins of all the people. Now, Moses was deceived and consequently deceived us, or otherwise Jesus of Nazareth is a false teacher. For all he taught was 'metanoeite', 'metanoeite' [remorse and contrition for sins], as though someone being sorry for a crime would make restitution to the offended party. A person might repent ever so much, but what good would that do toward healing the man he had injured? None in the least. The mode of making atonement [as proscribed by our religion] was ordained by God and revealed to Moses. Yet, if someone has nothing to do but to repent, then the disease carries its own remedy. Then one could sin as often as one desires.

Look at Genesis 17: "And God said to Abraham, by his own mouth, that each and all that were circumcised by the cutting of the prepuce would be saved. This should be the seal of the covenant." Now, if this is not true, God must go against his own covenant, violate his own promises, as well as deceive the faith and cheat the obedience of his own children. This remains so if Jesus' teaching is true, for he sets up table (baptism) as the seal of God. I refer to Deuteronomy, where God said to Moses that He bent the laws [of nature], converted the elements for the protection of his people, and with his own arm delivered them out of a strong compact. That they should remember these things, and that the generations to be born should remember and never forget to trust in Him when in danger. He said that once every year we should roast a kid-lamb, and eat it with unleavened bread, and this should be the sign that we should trust Him in all times of danger. Now Jesus taught instead thereof that common bread and wine were to be used, a thing unheard of. And not only so, a thing (wine) that is altogether repugnant to God has to be drunk, something that fosters drunkenness and is well qualified to excite men's passions.

And oh, ye Masters of Israel, but think once. Jesus calls himself the Son of God, claims to have been born of 'almah' (virgin), that he and



his Father are one and equal. This leads to the following conclusion: If he is right, his Father is false. If they were one, then their teachings would be one. If his teachings are true, those of God must be wrong, or there are not those perfections in Him that we learn in pronouncing his holy name. In case we tolerate the teachings of Jesus, we would say to the Romans that all of our former teachings are false, that the God of the Hebrews is not to be trusted, that He is weak, wanting in forethought, that He is vacillating and not to be trusted, much less to be honored and obeyed. Consequently the world would lose confidence in our God and confidence in us as a religious people. This would impregnate the whole atmosphere with moral pollution. This manner does not only cut off, but blocks the way of all Jews to heaven. Not only this, it eliminates our hope in the salvation of our forefathers, who obeyed God in his ordinances, believed in his promises, and shouted in the triumphs of a holy life for fourteen hundred years. He entirely ignores God's Holy Temple, which is the house God had built by our forefathers under his own supervision. There He promised to dwell with his children, hear their prayers, and be pleased with their sacrifices. This Tempel is the bond of the Jews. Here all men can come and be blessed. It is the earthly home of the souls of men, the place where men may hide from the storms of sin and persecution. This Temple is where the foolish may learn wisdom, the place where the naked soul can be clothed and where the hungry may be fed. This the grandest gift of our Father.

Jesus completely ignores this Temple and says the priests have made it a den of thieves. He sets up a sneer and even scoffs at its sacred ordinances, and with a sort of selfish triumph says it shall be ruined. From his manner of saying it, I have no doubt he would be glad to see it quickly done. But what would be the condition of our people if this Temple was removed? What would be the use of the priesthood if the Temple was ruined? Where would we find an answer by Urim and Thummim [a breastplate with precious stones that served as a priestly device for obtaining answers]? How would the soul of a person be purified, if the 'Holy Bathkole', the 'Ruach Ha-Kadesh' [two words meaning Spirit of God], should depart? There in that Holy Temple of God he has been burning to the consuming of sin and the purifying of the heart since our return from the Babylonian Exile. My argument is, if this Temple is destroyed, or even forsaken by the Jews, we as a nation will have been utterly destroyed. We might as well put our necks under the feet of idolatry and give up all hope.

One more subject I place before my Masters of Israel. Is it compatible with our religion, or is it consistent with philosophy, or admitted in his Holy Word, that there can be more gods than one? When we pronounce 'Eloah Shaddai Hælion Adonai' [different names for God] there can be but one living God. By reference to Deuteronomy 6:4, He says by mouth of Moses, when he was all aglow with the glory of God – and remember, He speaks either by mouth or quill, it

is He that speaks, not man – “The Lord our God is one God. There can be but one.” And elsewhere [where?]: “I am and have been with you. I brought you up. I delivered you out of a strong compact. I delivered you out of their hand and kept you dry, while your enemies were drowned in the sea. I will not forsake you. I promised your ancestors I would not. But if you forsake Me, then desolation will come upon you, and put you in swift destruction.” In David’s Song of Joy 5:3-4 it is said: “I am God alone. If I turn to the right or to the left, if I go down into the depths of the sea, or into the centre of the earth, or over the heavens, I should find no companion.” In chapter 3: “I am God alone, and alone I am God. Beside Me there is no help for man nor angels.” [David’s Song of Joy is not to be found anywhere, perhaps being referred to in 1 Samuel 18:6.] Then in chapter 13 of this book the command is given: “Thou shalt pay the Lord thy God once a year a half-shekel of silver, that thou and thy children, and all the strangers that are within thy gate, may know that there is no God beside Me, on whom they may call in time of danger.”

Now, having all these commands and teachings from the very lips of God himself before my eyes, and being held responsible for the soundness of our doctrine and the proper inculcation of the same among the Jewish people, what was I to do? Could I stand as the priest of the Most High God, and see your blessed religion perverted by an impostor? Could I stand and see the Holy Temple of our God deserted and forsaken? Could I stand and see all the holy ordinances, which had been appointed by our God for securing salvation to Israel, perverted by an impostor? All the blessed doctrines that were appointed for the government and instruction of the priesthood, thence to be imparted to the youth of our land, set aside, and that by one that could show no authority, only the authority of John the Baptist. This John the Baptist could give no authority for whom he worked except by pointing at ‘the one who sent him to baptize’, and he could not tell about himself who he was, nor whence he came. Hence you can see the responsible position that I, the High Priest of God for the Jewish society [qahal], occupied. According to our laws, I was made responsible and stood between my God and my people, to protect them in ways of doctrine and government. As concerns the latter I refer to the capitulation made between the Sanhedrin and Augustus Cæsar, as written in the holy supplements of our writings. We submitted to taxation by the Romans. From their side, the Romans are to protect our holy religion from foreign foes in order that the Holy Temple or any of its sacred ordinances should never be molested, nor the Holy City Jerusalem be polluted by Roman idolatry. Now, the covert plan that was followed by Jesus, was well qualified to deceive the common people. It had already led many to forsake the Temple and hold her ordinances in derision, as well as to neglect the priestly teachings or to refuse to pay the tithes for their supplies.

To such an extent he had already inculcated into the Jewish mind his pernicious ways to salvation, that the Jewish cause was almost lost.

There are two reasons for this: First, the people to whom he preached were an ignorant set, and knew but very little about doctrine of any kind. They are a restless sort of men, who are always finding fault and wanting something new, and never associate with the more enlightened part of the community in order to learn. Another reason of his having many followers is that his doctrines are congenial to unsanctified flesh. They are so suited to human nature that they require no sacrifices. They need not go to the Temple to worship God. They need not fast, and if they do they can when and where they please. They need pay no tithes to keep up the Temple or the priesthood, but every man can be his own priest and worship God as he chooses. All this is so compatible with human nature that, although he has been preaching for less than three years, he has more followers today than Abraham, while they have become extremely hostile toward the Jews that are faithful to their God. If it had not been for the Roman soldiers, on the day of his execution we would have had one of the bloodiest insurrections ever known to the Jewish Commonwealth. I am told that there was never seen such a concourse of people assembled at Jerusalem as at the cross. One of my guards informs me that there were several hundred thousand, and, although there were two others crucified at the same time, Jesus was the great centre of attraction. They called out: "Who is this Jesus of Nazareth? What is his crime?" Some of his friends cried out: "Nothing, he is being executed because he was a friend of the poor." "Take him down! Take him down!", they cried out. The soldiers had to use their spears to push them back. But when he yielded up the ghost, he proved to all that he was hypostatical [an actual, concrete existence, that is, possessing a human body], and the ludicrousness of the iconoclastic covenant [a covenant of images or idols] showed how his 'unity with the Trinity' was all a sham. How could the unpronounced NAME suffer or be captured by men, or die, unless he is the one that had to die for the multitudes? And if so, I was only accomplishing God's holy purposes, which exonerates me from guilt.

Note: In those days God's name 'Yahweh' was unpronounced. Each time, the written name Yahweh was seen (yod, he, vav, he / YHVH), it was pronounced Hashem, or 'the NAME'.

It seemed to me a necessity to remove him. That this might be evident to your minds, I suggest to compare our present condition to the past. Jesus of Nazareth spent two years in Egypt under the instruction of Rabbi Joshua, from whom he learned the art of thaumaturgy [the use of magic] to such perfection as had never been taught in any school of necromancy [communication with spirits], as exists among the heathens. If the healing miracles of Jesus are true, as they must be – for they are so acknowledged by friends and foes – he must have learned it from [the cult of] Horus and Serapis, as practised by the heathen priests. He came back to 'Palestine' as a physician [see note]. He was by nature a zealot as well as a Hebrew patriarch [of noble descent]. When John's preaching excited idealistic minds, Jesus also went to that teacher, who inspired him to inculcate and promulgate

his doctrines. Notwithstanding his youth and inexperience, Jesus started out as a public orator and teacher with the teachings of John, and in that capacity referred exclusively to his authority – nowadays every public teacher has to be ordained by some acknowledged authority. As long as John was at large, Jesus, in the capacity of an itinerant teacher and physician roused the people of Galilee to ‘metanoia’ (repentance of sin) as the way to bring about a restoration of the Kingdom of Heaven. He got the same opposition as John from those who did not admit that they were more sinful than their progenitors, and who did not admit that asceticism was the proper way for the restoration of the Kingdom of Heaven. On the other hand, he had the same success as John among the lower classes, such as foreign harlots, sodomites, publicans, and other Roman migrants. The intelligent portion, however, remained cold and unmoved by his zeal. The cures he performed, appeared miraculous to his followers, but most ridiculous to the intelligent Jews and men of sober and reflective minds.

Note: The name Palestine was only introduced after the second century Bar Kochba revolt, more than a hundred years after the Crucifixion – it was not in existence then. Perhaps Caiaphas used ‘Ha-Aretz’, meaning ‘the Land’, or God’s land, and it was the translator who changed it into Palestine. Haaretz might as well be translated as ‘my country’ or ‘home land’.

Jesus embraced the humanitarian precepts of the Hillelites, presenting conspicuously the cosmopolitan spirit of Judaism, and he did it almost in the words of Hillel, who taught it before. Their faith and doctrine being alike, it was not hard for him to create excitement, or to find plenty of followers. In addition to all of this, he taught a system of low morals and so void of all ritualistic ideas that it was easy for him to get any number of followers. He taught the people that there was but one living and true God, but he taught them at the same time that he was that God, that his [heavenly] Father was merged into himself and he could only manifest himself [if his Father acted] through him. This theory confutes itself if they had only taken the time to reflect: as he was hypostatical or corporeal his companions were cut off from him if not immediately in his presence, which is altogether incompatible with the faith of the Jews [if indeed he was God]. Right in the face of this doctrine, he taught them that there was a special providence as well as a general providence, as if there could ever be a general providence without God being present in all places at all times, which is the lesson we learn from pronouncing his NAME [Hashem]. He taught that the dead will rise and live again either in a future state of happiness or one of misery that reflects the way they lived here. Therefore he taught future rewards and punishments; but he being present now, how could he reward in the future? He taught the revelation and the prophets, but contradicted all their teachings. He taught the election of Israel by the Almighty, but ignored all the teachings of Israel. He taught the eternity of God’s laws and promises by the principle that the humanitarian laws were more

important than the ritual laws and doctrines. Nonetheless, I do not think he wished to abolish the latter, or even the traditional laws, but merely wanted to supersede them by a higher life.

The logical outcome of all of this was that he disregarded the laws of Levitical cleanness, which are considered so important by the Sham-maites and the Essenes, but also by the Hillelites. This is the point where division commenced, and the breach grew wider and wider until an insurrection was brewing. He cut himself so far loose from the Jews that he ate with unclean sinners, publicans and lepers, and permitted harlots to touch him, while his disciples went so far as to eat their meals without washing themselves. Furthermore, he looked upon the whole of the Levitical institutions – the places of worship, sacrifices, and its priesthood – as no longer necessary and not worth taking the life of an animal. This was certainly the opinion of the Hillelites. Jesus, it seems, found in this Hillelite school a party furnished to hand, ready to take up with his heresy – and a large party they are – almost capable to divide the whole of the Jewish Commonwealth.

They taught the repentance of sin, the practice of benevolence and charity, the education of the young, and goodwill toward mankind, as possessing much more moral value than all the Levitical cleanness or compliance with the whole moral law, given to us by our God for our government. His preaching was of the parabolical style. He would rely on a text of scripture, for he seemed to hold the scriptures in high veneration, so his preaching was on the midrash style of the scribes; a maxim was expressed in the style of Solon or of Sirach's son. His great object was to come as near to the Jewish theology as possible so as to destroy the Jewish way entirely, and establish his own. Hence, he resorted to the allegorical method of the Egyptian Hebrews, uttering many good and wise sayings, which were not new to the learned, but which were taken from the common wisdom of the country, known by all acquainted with the literature of the rabbis. But they were new to his class of hearers, who were not accustomed to listen to the wise. He had no education, comparatively speaking. He was full of nervous excitement, all of which went to inspire his hearers with enthusiasm. He took but little care of his health or person and did not care for his own relatives. He travelled mostly on foot in the company of his disciples and some suspicious women, and lived on the charity of his friends. He seemed to take no notice of the political affairs of his country, on a track to be governed as any other nation. Indeed, if he had any preference it would be for the Romans. It seems that he became so infatuated that he really thought he was the head of the Kingdom of Heaven. This manner of preaching, along with his presumption, aroused his enemies to a powerful pitch. I can say that I did everything within my power to keep the zealots from mobbing him in the Temple. They had no confidence in a doctrine that set the Jewish laws at naught and mocked the priesthood of God. Together with the Sadducees and scribes they were not

willing to submit to a man who acknowledged no authority higher than himself, who was seemingly endeavoring to overturn everything they held more sacred and dearer than life. Jesus' mode and manner were well qualified to deceive the unsuspecting.

"Let us have all things in common", said he, "and he that wants to be greatest among you has to prove his greatness by rendering the greatest service to all, and if any of the higher powers compel thee to go one mile, let him that is compelled go ten miles." This caused him to be attacked more in his policy than in his doctrine. The great question to us Jews is: Here are the Romans upon us; how can we get rid of them? Jesus' idea was to let the Romans alone. It matters not who rules and governs the nations. If they abuse you, love them in return, and they cannot be your enemies for long. No man can continue to abuse another who returns injuries with love. Keep away from them and pray in secret for the return of the Kingdom of Heaven and God's grace. This will soon make all things right. "Pay your taxes", he would say to them, "it is only Cæsar's money you pay, which for you is unlawful on account of its idolatrous effigies [that depicted the emperor as a god]." Again, he would say to his hearers: "You cannot conquer the Romans, better convert them, and they are your enemies no longer. They already have your Temple in their possession. Their yoke is getting heavier every day, and the more you fight them, the more they will abuse you. Therefore, your only chance is to love them and try to make your yoke easy and your burden light, by having them as your friends." Indeed, Jesus' conduct was so strange and incompatible with the interest of the Jews as a nation, that it seemed to me that he was a subject employed by the Romans to keep the Jews submissive and obedient to all their tyranny and abuse.

This policy was most powerfully attacked by the officiating priest, and both by the Shammaites and Zealots, and, in fact, the whole Jewish nation was becoming aroused to a war heat. The reprimands of Jesus were so severe against the rich and highly educated, that they had turned against him and mobilized all the power they had of their wealth and talent, so that I saw that a bloody insurrection was brewing fast. The public mind of the Jews was becoming more and more divided and corrupt. Heretical doctrines were being diffused all over the land. The Temple was forsaken and the holy sacraments neglected. The people were dividing into sects. These breaches were like a rent in a garment tearing wider apart continually. As it seemed to me, the whole of the Jewish theocracy was about to be blown away as a bubble on a breaker.

As the Jews were getting more and more divided and confused, the tyranny of the Romans increased. All they wanted was an excuse to slaughter the Jews and confiscate their property. At the time, both the doctrine and religion of the Jews were spreading rapidly all over Rome, which gave the Romans great alarm. Sejanus undertook to

have an ordinance passed in the Senate, abolishing the Jewish religion from Rome. When Sejanus considered that their religion would be cause for an insurrection, they banished all the Jews from Rome. [That was in the year 19 AD, the year also that John the Baptist started his mission. The tilling of the field could begin!] Back they came to Judeah with all their idolatry and heresy and many other corrupt principles from the Romans, which fitted them to join any party for profit. Up to now the Roman governors had shown great kindness to the Jews. There never was a better man than Hyrcanus. The Jews enjoyed great peace during his administration. Later on, Tiberias turned against us, and so Pilate removed the army from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. I say, no nation with any selfrespect, or one that had any energy left, would or could stand such a thing without a struggle. Now, the preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth brought all these things upon us. When Herod Antipas captured John, it quieted matters in Galilee, so that they had peace until Jesus started it up afresh. I had issued orders to Jesus to desist from preaching unless he taught as the Jews taught. He sent me the impertinent word that his doctrine was not of this world, but had reference to the world to come [the Olam ha-ba or Kingdom of God]. All the time he was doing his best to destroy the peace and harmony of this present world.

Note 1: Sejanus was the prefect of the Roman imperial bodyguard (the Prætorians), becoming ever more powerful. After Tiberius withdrew to Capri in 26 AD, year of the Crucifixion of our Lord, Sejanus was left in control of the administration of the Empire. Tiberius was Emperor from 14 to 37 AD.

Note 2: Hyrcanus II was for a long time the Jewish High Priest, a position that had to be approved by the Romans. He was also briefly King of Judeah in 67 BC and was the ethnarch or ruler of Judeah from circa 47 to 40 BC, but he remained High Priest too. In the year 40, his successor ousted him from all his functions.

Now, according to our law (Saphra, teachings Jose B.), it devolves on me to see that the people have a sound doctrine being taught to them. Hence, it is my duty to examine all the midrashim or sermons of all our preachers. If it appears that anyone teaches the people wrongly, or that his conduct does not agree with his profession, then it is my duty to cause him to desist. If anyone disregards the holy laws of ablution or in any way defiles himself, or be found guilty of misconduct in any way – either in manner of life or in doctrine – then it is upon me to adjudge such a person and pass sentence for his crime. This I did with Jesus of Nazareth by which I saved the society (qahal) from heresy and saved the cause of the Jewish Commonwealth from final ruin. But understand that I did not act rashly nor illegally, as I am accused of. I only passed sentence under protest and I followed the order of the whole court that belongs to the High Priest, containing twelve members, consisting of elders and priests. As you see, it was not my voluntary act, but it was a legal one in accordance with our law. After I examined Jesus on the various



charges, he said in the presence of the whole court that each and all of them were true. I then explained him that the highpriestly court [Sanhedrin] would forgive him of these charges if he desisted from these things in the coming future. He answered most emphatically and positively he would not. Under these circumstances I was compelled according to our own law to sentence him to death, for if he continued to promulgate his pernicious heresies, the Jews, as a nation, were going to perish together with their religion.

As you will find in the Tosephta [in the supplements of our holy writings], a nation has always the right of self-preservation, and as we had conceded the right to the Romans of executing our criminal laws [the death penalty], it became my painful duty to send him to Pontius Pilate, on the following charge:

*Caiaphas, High Priest of God the Most High, to Pontius Pilate, Governor of the Roman Province:*

*Jesus of Nazareth is thus charged by the High Court of the Jews, first, with teaching the doctrine that there are more gods than one, which is contrary to the teachings of the Jewish law, which doctrine he most positively refused to desist from in the presence of this court. Second, he teaches that he is God, which is contrary to the Jewish law, because he is visible and comprehensible [as a human]. After having been asked to desist by this court, he most positively affirmed that he is the Son of God. Third, he teaches and affirms that the Bathkole [Holy Spirit] cannot come until he goes away, which is contrary to the teachings of the Jews, because it was She that brooded over the waters, and She has been in the habitual light of the world ever since, from all of which he refuses to desist. Furthermore, as regards his teachings, he teaches baptism as the seal of God instead of circumcision, which was established by the decrees of God with Abraham as a seal of the Jews. When abjured to desist by this court, he declared he would not. He also teaches asceticism as the means of salvation, contrary to the Jewish custom. And again he affirmed in the presence of this court he would not desist. Finally, he teaches that the Levitical ablution is of no service, while we hold that the outward washing is the sign of inward purity. When abjured to desist this teaching he emphatically refused.*

*He has abrogated the ordinance given by God to Moses of the Pascal Supper, wherein we should roast a lamb and eat it with unleavened bread, but Jesus introduced a custom altogether different and that without any authority. He has*

*introduced common bread and wine, which are not only forbidden, but are well qualified to excite men's passions and make them forget God rather than to remember and trust Him, this feast having been introduced that we should remember to trust Him in the hours of trouble. When asked why he did this, all he could say was: "Hitherto I work, and my Father works." He has abrogated the priesthood, and set the Temple at naught, which is the very life's blood of the Jewish faith. Were it not that God our Father has given us these holy ordinances we would not be so tenacious of them. We know they are the pillars upon which the Jewish theocracy is built, and that we cannot live without them. Although Jesus of Nazareth has been abjured time and again to stop teaching these ways of death, he has as often declared he would not. Therefore, it devolves on me as the proper and the only authority to pronounce sentence upon him.*

These charges were written by my scribe and sent with the officers to Pilate for his consent – of course, I did not expect him to execute him as he did. But it seems that the mob was so great that Pilate never received them. I expected Pilate to send Jesus back to me, so that I could send him to you for your approval. And if so, then I would have proceeded to try him with Urim and Thummim, with the regular lackeys on guard, as our law requires. But, apparently, Pilate thirsted for his blood. Like all guilty tyrants he was afraid of his own shadow, and wished to destroy everything that threatened his power.

*With these reasons for my actions, I submit the case,  
which I am sure will be considered favorably  
by my Masters of Israel.*

~~~~~

## CHAPTER VII - ARCHKOVOLUME

### THE CONFESSION OF CAIAPHAS

—

**Originally called: The Report of Caiaphas sent  
to the Sanhedrin concerning the Resurrection of Jesus**

PRELIMINARY REMARKS: After having made the preceding record of Caiaphas, on unwinding the same scroll we found another report from him. It may be interesting to the reader to know what we mean by a scroll. It is similar to parchment. The Hebrew 'numet' means a pulp made from the bark of the reed into a paste that was dried in the sun until it became hard. When pressed and polished it shines beautifully, and its surface is as smooth as our paper. There are two kinds: one is called papyrus, the other hierotike. The latter is more costly and used by priests alone. It is about 16 inches wide and is cemented together by a gum that exudes from a tree resembling our elm. It is written upon with some kind of indelible ink or paint, with a common reed quill, which is fashioned like our pens. The writing is done by the sopher, which is the Hebrew for scribe. He is called grammateus by the Greeks. The report of Caiaphas is written in the so-called square Hebrew letters. The letters are from a half-inch to an inch in size, so that one can imagine what a roll of parchment it would take to record a deed. It is read only with difficulty by the best Hebrew scholars, and they must have reference books to assist them. But after one has gotten the thread of the subject he can get along with it. This is why I got Dr. McIntosh to go with me. He and Dr. Twyman have been in the business for many years. The windlass, as it might be called – for it more resembles our common rope-winders than anything else – is a square piece of timber, about three inches in diameter, to which the scroll is fastened at one end, around which it is rolled like a spool. At the proper distance are tied two transverse sticks to hold the parchment to its proper place. The windlass with the scroll is placed at one end of a table, and an empty windlass at the other end, so that as you unwind from the one to read, the scroll winds around the other. The letters are very distinct. Hundreds of these are arranged in rows. They are all especially marked, which makes for easier reading. There is another class of books of fine sheep or goat skin, about eight by twelve inches. The writing on these is very fine and difficult to read. They are bound between cedar boards, with clasps, and contain from eight to forty sheets to the book. These are the kind of which Josephus has written 72 books. But let's return to Caiaphas' report. After unwinding several feet, we came across another communication from Caiaphas. I hardly know whether to call it a resignation or a confession. One thing I do know, it is one of the most solemn things I have ever read. We thanked God that we had come to Constantinople and that the followers of Mohammed had given orders to preserve these sacred scrolls in the Sophia Mosque.

*To You, Masters of Israel,*

As I have made a former defence to you, and you have approved the same, I feel in duty bound to communicate to you some facts that have come to my knowledge since that communication. A few days after the execution of Jesus of Nazareth the news of his resurrection from the dead became so common that I found it necessary to investigate it, because the excitement was more intense than ever before, and my own life as well as that of Pilate was in danger. I sent for Malkus, the captain of the Royal City Guard, who informed me he knew nothing personally, as he had placed Isham in command of the guard. But from what he could learn from the soldiers, the scene was awe-inspiring, and the report was so generally believed that it was useless to deny it. He thought my only chance was to suppress it among the soldiers, and have John and Peter banished to Crete, or arrested and imprisoned, and if they would not be quiet, to treat them as I had treated Jesus. He said that all the soldiers he had conversed with were convinced that Jesus was resurrected by supernatural power and was still living, and that he was no human being, for the light and the angels and the dead that came out of their graves all went to prove that something had happened that never occurred on earth before. He said that John and Peter were spreading the news all over the country, and that if Jesus would appear at the head of a host and declare himself as King of the Jews, he believed all the Jews would fight for him. I sent for the lieutenant, who gave a lengthy account of what happened that morning, all of which I suppose you have learned already and will investigate. This I am convinced of, that something transcending the laws of nature took place that morning, which cannot be accounted for by natural laws. I find it quite useless to try to get any of the soldiers to deny it, for they are so excited that they cannot be reasoned with. I regret that I had the soldiers placed at the tomb, for the very thing they were to prevent they have helped to establish. After questioning the soldiers and officers to my satisfaction, my mind became so disturbed that I could neither eat nor sleep.

THE INTERVIEW OF THE WOMEN: I then sent for John and Peter. They came and brought Mary and Joanna, who are the women that went to embalm Jesus' body the morning of the resurrection, as it is called. They were very convincing as they related the circumstances. Mary said that when they went, it was at the break of the day. They met the soldiers returning from the sepulchre, and saw nothing strange until they came to the tomb and found that it was empty. The stone that covered the sepulchre was rolled to one side, and two men dressed in flowing white were sitting, one at each end of the sepulchre. Mary asked them where was her Lord. They said: "He is risen from the dead. Did he not tell you he would rise the third day and show himself to the people, to prove that he was the Lord of life?" "Go tell his disciples", said they. Joanna said she saw but one man, but this discrepancy must have been due to their excitement, because they said they were much alarmed. They both said that as

they returned, they met the Master, who told them that he was the resurrection and the life and that all that will accept shall be resurrected from the second death. "We fell at his feet, all bathed in tears, and when we rose up he was gone." Both these women wept for joy while relating these circumstances. John shouted aloud, which made me tremble in every limb, for I could not help thinking that something that was the exclusive work of God had occurred, but what it all meant was a great mystery to me. It might be, I said to myself, that God had sent this message by the mouth of this stranger; it might be that he was 'the seed of the woman' [a reference to Genesis 3:15], and that we his people had executed him.

THE INTERVIEW OF THE MEN: I then asked John and Peter if they could give any further evidence in regard to this man for I wished to be informed about their personal experiences. Peter related how he met Jesus, that he passed by where he happened to be, and bade him to follow him. He felt attracted to him, but at first it was more through curiosity than anything in the man himself. That soon he became acquainted with Mary, who told him that he was her son. She related to him the extraordinary circumstances of his birth, that she was convinced that he was to be the King of the Jews. She spoke of many strange things concerning his life, which made Peter feel more interested in him than he would have been otherwise. He said that Jesus was a man so pleasant in character with such a childlike innocence that no one could help liking him after he got to know him; that though he seemed to be stern and cold, he was not so in reality; that he was exceedingly kind, especially to the poor; that he would make any sacrifice for the sick and needy, and would spare no effort to impart knowledge to anyone that would call on him. His knowledge was so profound that he had seen him interrogated by the most learned doctors of the law, and yet he always gave them the most perfect satisfaction, so much that the sopher or scribes, and the Hillelites, and Shammaites were afraid to open their mouths in his presence. They had attacked him so often and time and again had been repelled that they shunned him like a wolf. Nonetheless, after he repelled them he did not enjoy the triumph as they did over others of whom they had gotten the ascendancy. As to his private life, he seemed not to be a man of pleasure nor sorrow. He mingled with society for its benefit, but took no part at all in what was going on. I (Peter) had heard many tell of what occurred when he was baptized. Because of that and by what his mother told, I was awaiting for a display of his divine power, if he had any, for I knew he could never be King of the Jews unless he got help from on high.

Once, when we were attending a marriage-feast, the wine gave out. His mother told him so, and then he ordered men to fill up some water-pots that were sitting near. They put in nothing but water, for I watched them doing it, but when they poured it out, it was wine, and so all the people at the feast tasted it. When eventually the master found out, he called for Jesus to honor him, but he had disappeared. It seemed that he did not want to be popular. This spirit displeased

us, for we knew if he was going to be the King of the Jews he must become popular with them. His behavior upset his mother, for she was trying hard to bring him into the forefront in order to make him popular among the people, as in general people could not help being fond of him when they saw him. Another peculiarity was that in his presence everyone felt safe.

There seemed to be an almighty power pervading the air wherever he went so that everyone felt secure, and believed that no harm could befall them if Jesus were present. As we were in our fishing-boat, I saw Jesus coming out toward us, walking on the water. I knew that if he could make the waves support him, they could support me too. I asked him if I might come to him. He told me to come, but when I saw the waves gathering around me I began to sink, and asked him to help. He lifted me up, and told me to have faith in God.

On another occasion we were sailing on the sea, and there was a great storm. It blew at a fearful rate, and all on board thought they would be lost. We awakened the master, and when he saw the raging of the storm he stretched out his hand and said: "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased to blow, the thunder stopped, the lightnings withdrew, and the billowing sea seemed as quiet as a babe in its mother's arms all done in a moment of time. This I saw with my own eyes, and from then on I was convinced that he was no common man. In no way did he work by enchantment like the Egyptian thaumaturgists, because in all their tricks they never attack the laws of nature. In vain might they order the thunder to hush, or the winds to abate, or the lightnings to cease their flashing.

At another instance I [John] witnessed this man [performing a miracle] while we were traveling from Jericho. There was a blind man, who cried out to him for mercy, and Jesus asked: "Go, bring him near." When I brought him near Jesus, he asked him what he wanted. He said he wanted to see him. Jesus said: "Receive thy sight." [That was all], as he was not near enough for Jesus to lay his hands upon him or use any art [of magic]. Thus were all his miracles performed. He did not act as the Egyptian necromancers. They use vessels, such as cups, bags, and jugs, and many other things to deceive. Jesus used nothing but his simple speech and in such a way that all could clearly understand him. It seemed as if the laws of nature were his main instruments of action, and that nature was as obedient to him as a slave to his master.

I [John] recall another occasion when a young man had died. Jesus [knew and] loved his sisters. One of them went with Jesus to the tomb. He commanded it to be uncovered. The sister said: "Master, by this time he is offensive [because of cadaverous smell], for he has been dead already for four days." Jesus replied: "Only have faith." He just called the young man by his name, and there he came forth out of the tomb. He is still living today. Peter proposed that I should see him for myself. — Thus argued Peter and John.

If Jesus had such power over nature and nature's laws and power over death in others, equally as well would he have such power over

death to lay down his life and take it up again, as he said he would do. As he (John) proposes to bring hundreds of witnesses to prove all he says, and much more witnesses whose veracity cannot be doubted, and as I had heard many of these things before from different men, both friends and foes, and seeing the humble trust and confidence of these men and women – besides, as John says, thousands of others are equally strong in their belief – it throws me into great agitation. Although these things are related by his friends, that is the friends of Jesus, yet these men talk like men of truth, and their testimony corroborates other evidence that I have from other sources, so that it convinces me that this is something that should not be rashly dealt with. I feel some dreadful foreboding that is like a weight upon my heart. I cannot feel as a criminal from the fact that I was acting according to my best judgement with the evidence before me. I feel that I was acting in defence of God and my country, which I love better than my life, and if I was mistaken, I was honest in my mistake. As we teach that honesty of purpose gives substance to an action, on this basis I shall try to clear myself of any charge. Yet, there is a conscious fear in my heart, so that I have no rest day or night. I feel sure that if I were to meet Jesus I would fall dead at his feet. Yes, I have the feeling that if I went out I would certainly meet him.

In this state of conscious dread I remained investigating the Scriptures to know more about the prophecies concerning this man, but found nothing to satisfy my mind. I locked my door and gave the guards orders to let no one in without first giving notice. While thus engaged, with no one in the room but my wife and Annas, her father, I lifted up my eyes and behold Jesus of Nazareth stood before me. My breath stopped, my blood ran cold, and I was in the act of falling, when he spoke and said: “Be not afraid, it is I. You condemned me that you might go free. This is the work of my Father. Your only wrong is that you have a wicked heart. This you must repent of. This last lamb you have slain is the one that was appointed before the foundation (of the world). This sacrifice is made for all men. Your other lambs were for those who offered them. This is for all. This is the last. It is for you if you’ll accept it. I died that you and all humankind might be saved.” At this he looked at me with such melting tenderness that it seemed to me I was nothing but tears, and my strength was all gone. I fell on my face at his feet as one that was dead. When Annas lifted me up, Jesus was gone, and the door still locked. No one could tell when or where he went.

So, noble Masters, I do not feel that I can officiate as priest anymore. If this strange personage is from God and should prove to be the Saviour we have been looking for for so long, and I have been the means of crucifying him, I have no further offerings to make for sin. But I will wait and see how these things develop. If he proves to be the ruler we are looking for, this will soon develop into something more grand in the future. His glory will increase, his influence will spread wider and wider until the whole earth shall be full of his glory,



and all the kingdoms of the world shall be his dominion. Such are the teachings of the prophets on this subject. Therefore, you will appoint Jonathan, or someone else, to fill the holy place.

NOTE BY REVEREND MAHAN: We found out that soon after Jonathan became the High Priest, 'though the historical records tell differently'.

OUR NOTE: This comment of Mahan is wrong, for the official list of High Priests of Israel, available on Wikipedia, lists Jonathan ben Ananus as the successor of Joseph Caiaphas. Yet, because Jesus was crucified in 26 AD, the reigning periods should be from 18 until 26 for Caiaphas, and from 26 until 37 AD for Jonathan. Remarkably, Caiaphas' reign covers the whole period of the mission of John the Baptist and Jesus combined. The same can be said of Pontius Pilate, who started his governorship in the year 16.



## CHAPTER VIII - ARCHKOVOLUME

### PATERCULUS' NOTES

### FOLLOWED BY THE ACTA PILATI, OR PILATE'S REPORT TO CÆSAR

Marcus Velleius Paterculus, a Roman historian, was about 11 years old when Jesus was born. (Information that is probably derived from the manuscript, because this piece of information is completely new.)

- Some modern scholars identify him with Gaius Velleius Paterculus, whose name occurs in an inscription on a north African milestone. Priscian and Tacitus speak of him as born in a distinguished Campanian family (Campania is a region of South Italy). From what we gather from these writers, Valleius must have been a close friend of Cæsar, who raised him by degrees until he became one of the great men of Rome, and for 16 years he commanded the army. He returned to Rome in the year 31 where he finished his work, known as the *Historiæ Romania*. He held the office of prætor when Emperor Augustus died, while Vinicius was Consul.

In the document found, Valleius says that in Judeah he met a man called Jesus of Nazareth, who, as he says, was one of the most remarkable characters he had ever seen, that he was more afraid of Jesus than of a whole army, for he cured all manner of diseases and raised the dead, and when he cursed the orchards or fruit-trees for their barrenness, they instantly withered to their roots. After referring to the miraculous works of Jesus, he said that, although Jesus had such power, he did not use it to injure anyone, but seemed always inclined to help the poor. He continued by saying that the Jews were divided in their opinion of him, the poorer class claiming him as their king and their deliverer from the Roman rule, and that if Jesus raised an army and give it the power, he could sweep the world in a single day. But the rich Jews hated him and cursed him behind his back, calling him an Egyptian necromancer, though they were afraid of him as of death.

- In his report to Cæsar, Pilate tells of an interview he had with 'the Nazarene'. He invited Jesus at the prætorium to have in private a friendly conversation with him. During the meeting, our beloved Saviour remarks: "Verily I say unto you, before the Rose of Sharon blossoms, the blood of the just shall be spilt." It thus follows that this interview, mentioned in the *Acta Pilati*, took place not long before the Crucifixion.

Found at the Vatican at B72

**PILATE's REPORT**  
**To TIBERIUS CÆSAR, EMPEROR OF ROME**  
**CONCERNING THE ARREST, TRIAL,**  
**AND CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS**

In between []boxes[], like this, has been added to the previous document after comparison with the presentation in "Pontius Pilate in Vienne" by Joseph Méry.

*Noble Sovereign, Greeting!*

THE events of the last few days in my province have been of such a nature that I will give the details in full as they occurred, as I would not be surprised if, in the course of time, they may change the destiny of our nation, for it seems of late that all the gods have ceased to be propitious. I am almost ready to say: 'Cursed be the day that I succeeded Vallerius Gratus in the government of Judeah, for since then my life has been one of continual uneasiness and distress.' [The predecessor of Pilate is known as Vallerius Gratus, but in the editions of the ArchkoVolume is written Vallerius Flaceus.]

On my arrival at Jerusalem [in the year 16 AD], I took possession of the prætorium. I then ordered a splendid feast to be prepared, to which I invited the Tetrarch of Galilee [Herod Antipas], with the High Priest and his officers. [Note: The officiating High Priest was Ishmael ben Fabus, who left in the year 16, or it could have been Eleazar ben Ananus, who then took office.] At the appointed hour no guests appeared. This I considered an insult offered to my dignity [and to the whole government which I represent]. A few days later the High Priest deigned to pay me a visit. His deportment was grave and deceitful. He pretended that his religion forbade him and his attendants to sit at the table of the Romans, and eat and offer libations with them, [but this was only a sanctimonious seeming, for his very countenance betrayed his hypocrisy.] Although I thought it expedient to accept his excuse, from that moment I was convinced that the conquered had declared themselves the enemy of the conquerors. [I warn the Romans to beware of the High Priests of this country. They would betray their own mother to gain office and [have access to] a luxurious living.]

It seems to me that of conquered cities Jerusalem is the most difficult to govern. So turbulent are the people, that I live in dread of an insurrection [at any time. I have not a sufficient number of soldiers] to suppress it. I had only one Centurion and a hundred men [at my command]. I requested a reinforcement from the Prefect of Syria, who informed me that he had scarcely sufficient troops to defend his own province. An insatiate thirst for conquest to extend our empire beyond the means of defending it, I fear, will be the cause of the final overthrow of our whole government. [I lived secluded from the masses, for I did not know what those priests might incite the rabble

to do. Yet I endeavored to ascertain, as far as I could, the mind and standing of the people.[]

Among the various rumors that came to my ears there was one that in particular attracted my attention. A young man, it was said, had appeared in Galilee preaching with a noble unction a new law in the name of the God that had sent him. At first I was apprehensive that his design was to stir up the people against the Romans, but my fears soon dispelled. Jesus of Nazareth spoke rather as friend of the Romans than of the Jews. One day in passing by the place of Siloe, where there was a great concourse of people, I observed in the midst of the group a young man who was leaning against a tree, calmly addressing the multitude. I was told it was Jesus. This I could easily have suspected, so great was the difference between him and those listening to him. His golden-colored hair and beard gave to his appearance a celestial aspect. He appeared to be about thirty years of age. Never have I seen a sweeter or more serene countenance. What a contrast between him and his hearers, with their black beards and tawny complexions!

Unwilling to interrupt him by my presence, I continued my walk, but signified to my secretary to join the group and listen. My secretary's name is Manlius. He is the grandson of the chief of the conspirators who encamped in Etruria waiting for Catalina. [In 63 BC the conspiracy was exposed, forcing the Senator Catalina to flee from Rome.] Manlius had been for a long time an inhabitant of Judeah, and is well acquainted with the Hebrew language. He was devoted to me and worthy of my confidence. On entering the prætorium I found Manlius, who related to me the words Jesus had pronounced at Siloe. Never [Pilate's Court: Never have I heard in the Portico, nor] have I read in the works of the philosophers anything that can be compared to the maxims of Jesus. After one of the rebellious Jews, so numerous in Jerusalem, asked Jesus if it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, he replied: "Render unto Cæsar the things that belong to Cæsar, and unto God the things that are God's."

It was on account of the wisdom of his sayings that I granted so much liberty to the Nazarene. It was in my power to have had him arrested and exiled to Pontus [Note: a region on the southern coast of the Black Sea], but that would have been contrary to the justice which has always characterized the Roman government [in all its dealings with men. As a matter of fact,] this man was neither seditious nor rebellious. I extended to him my protection, unknown perhaps to himself. He was at liberty to act, to speak, to assemble and address the people, and to choose disciples, unrestrained by any prætorian mandate. Should it ever happen – may the gods avert the omen! – should it ever happen, I say, that the religion of our forefathers will be supplanted by the religion of Jesus, it will be to this noble toleration that Rome shall owe her premature death, while I, miserable

wretch, will have been the instrument of what the Jews call providence and we destiny.

But this unlimited freedom granted to Jesus provoked the Jews, not the poor but the rich and powerful. It is true, Jesus was severe on the latter, and this provided me the political reason for not restraining the liberty of the Nazarene. "Scribes and pharisees", he would say to them, "you are a race of vipers. You resemble painted sepulchres. You appear well unto men, but you have death within you." At other times he would sneer at the alms of the rich and proud, telling them that the mite of the poor is more precious in the sight of God. [I know, because] complaints were daily made at the prætorium against the insolence of Jesus. I was even informed that some misfortune would befall him, that it would not be the first time that Jerusalem had stoned those who called themselves prophets. [I got threats that] an appeal would be made to Cæsar. However, my policy was approved by the Senate, and I was promised a reinforcement, [that would be made possible] after the termination of the Parthian war. [There was a truce made between Rome and the Parthians in 1 AD, that lasted until 36 AD.]

Being too weak to suppress an insurrection, I resolved upon adopting a measure that promised to restore the tranquillity of the city without subjecting the prætorium to humiliating concessions. I invited Jesus, requesting an interview with him at the prætorium. He came. You know that in my veins flows the Spanish mixed with Roman blood as incapable of fear as it is of weak emotion. When the Nazarene made his appearance, I was walking in my basilica. Suddenly, my feet seemed fastened with an iron hand to the marble pavement and I trembled in every limb as does a guilty culprit, though the Nazarene was as calm as innocence itself. He came up to me and stopped, and by a signal sign he seemed to say to me 'I am here', [though he spoke not a word]. For some time I contemplated with admiration and awe this extraordinary type of man, a type unknown to our numerous painters, who have given form and figure to all the gods and heroes. [There was nothing about him that was repelling in its quality, yet I felt too awed and tremulous to approach him.]

"Jesus," said I unto him at last, and my tongue faltered, "Jesus of Nazareth, for the last three years I have granted you ample freedom of speech, nor do I regret it. Your words are those of a sage. I know not whether you have read Socrates or Plato, but this I know, there is in your discourses a majestic simplicity that elevates you far above those philosophers. The Emperor is informed of it, and I, his humble representative in this country, am glad of having allowed you that liberty of which you are so worthy. However, I must not conceal from you that your discourses have raised up against you powerful and inveterate enemies, nor is this surprising. Socrates had his enemies and fell victim to their hatred. Yours are doubly incensed against you on account of your discourses being so severe upon their conduct,

and they are against me on account of the liberty I have afforded you. They even accuse me of being indirectly leagued with you for the purpose of depriving the Hebrews of the little civil power which Rome has left them. My request, I do not say my order, is that you be more circumspect [and moderate] in your discourses in the future and more considerate of them, lest you arise the pride of your enemies, so as to raise against you the stupid populace, and compel me to employ the instruments of law.”

The Nazarene calmly replied: “Prince of the earth, your words proceed not from true wisdom. Say to the torrent to stop in the midst of the mountain-gorge where it uproots the trees of the valley. The torrent will answer that it obeys the laws of nature and the creator. God alone knows whither flow the waters of the torrent. Verily I say unto you, before the Rose of Sharon blossoms, the blood of the just shall be spilt.”

“Your blood shall not be spilt,” said I, with deep emotion, “you are more precious in my estimation on account of your wisdom than all the turbulent and proud pharisees who abuse the freedom granted them by the Romans. They conspire against Cæsar and take our kindness for fear [‘convert his bounty into fear’ is wrong translation – see Méry], [impressing the unlearned that Cæsar is a tyrant and seeks their ruin.] Insolent wretches! They are not aware that the wolf of the Tiber sometimes clothes himself with the skin of the sheep [to accomplish his wicked designs]. I will protect you against them. My prætorium shall be an asylum, sacred [both day and night].”

Jesus carelessly shook his head, and said with a grave and divine smile [Méry’s translation looks better: with a smile of divine grace]: “When the day shall have come there will be no asylums for the Son of Man, neither on the earth nor under the earth. The asylum of the just is there,” pointing to the heavens. “That which is written in the books of the prophets must be fulfilled.”

“Young man”, I answered, mildly, “you oblige me to convert my request into an order. The safety of the province, which has been confided to my care, requires it. You must observe more moderation in your discourses. Do not infringe on my order. You know the consequences. May happiness attend you. Farewell.”

“Prince of the earth,” replied Jesus “I come not to bring war into the world, but peace, love, and charity. I was born the same day on which Augustus Cæsar gave peace to the Roman world. Persecutions proceed not from me. I expect it from others, and will meet it in obedience to the will of my Father, who has shown me the way. Restrain, therefore, your worldly prudence. It is not in your power to stop [not: to arrest] the victim at the foot of the tabernacle of expiation.”

So saying, he disappeared like a bright shadow behind the curtains of the basilica, [to my great relief, for I felt a heavy burden on me, of which I could not relieve myself while in his presence].

To Herod, who then reigned in Galilee, Jesus' enemies addressed themselves to wreak vengeance on the Nazarene. Had Herod consulted his own inclinations, he would have ordered Jesus immediately to be put to death, but, though proud of his royal dignity, yet he hesitated to commit an act that might lessen his influence within the Senate, [or, like me, was afraid of Jesus. But it would never do for a Roman officer to be scared by a Jew.]

[Previously to this], Herod called on me at the prætorium, and, on rising [to take leave, after some trifling conversation], asked what was my opinion concerning the Nazarene. I replied that Jesus appeared to me to be one of those great philosophers that great nations sometimes produce. That his doctrines were by no means sacrilegious, and that the intentions of Rome were to leave him to that freedom of speech which was justified by his actions. Herod smiled maliciously, and, saluting me with ironical respect, departed.

The great feast of the Jews was approaching, and the intention was to avail themselves of the popular exultation which always manifests itself at the solemnities of a Passover. The city was overflowing with a tumultuous populace, clamoring for the death of the Nazarene. My emissaries informed me that the treasure of the Temple had been employed in bribing the people. The danger was pressing. A Roman Centurion had been insulted. I wrote to the Prefect of Syria for a hundred footsoldiers and as many cavalry. He declined. I saw myself alone with a handful of veterans in the midst of a rebellious city, too weak to suppress an uprising, and having no choice left but to tolerate it. They had seized upon Jesus, and the seditious rabble, although they had nothing to fear from the prætorium, believing, as their leaders had told them, that I winked at their sedition — continued vociferating: "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Three powerful parties had combined together at that time against Jesus. First, the Herodians and the Sadducees, whose seditious conduct seemed to have proceeded from two motives: they hated the Nazarene and had grown impatient with the Roman yoke. They never forgave me for having entered the Holy City with banners that bore the image of the Roman Emperor, and although in this instance I had made a serious mistake, yet the sacrilege did not appear less heinous in their eyes. Another grievance also rankled in their bosoms. I had proposed to employ a part of the treasure of the Temple in erecting edifices for public use. My proposal was scorned. The pharisees were the avowed enemies of Jesus. They cared not for the government. They bore with bitterness the severe reprimands which the Nazarene for three years had been continually giving them wherever he went. Timid and too weak to act by themselves, they had embraced the

quarrels of the Herodians and the Sadducees. Besides these three parties, I had to contend against the reckless and profligate populace, always ready to join a sedition, who tried to profit by the disorder and confusion that resulted therefrom.

Jesus was dragged before the High Priest and condemned to death. It was then that the High Priest, Caiaphas, performed a divisory act of submission. He sent his prisoner to me to confirm his condemnation and secure his execution. I answered him that, as Jesus was a Galilean, the affair came under Herod's jurisdiction, and ordered him to be sent thither. The wily Tetrarch professed humility, and, protesting his deference to the Lieutenant of Cæsar, he committed the fate of the man to my hands. Soon my palace assumed the aspect of a besieged citadel. Every moment the number of the malcontents increased. Jerusalem was inundated with crowds from the mountains of Nazareth. All Judeah appeared to be pouring into the city.

I had taken a wife from among the Gauls [French], who pretended to see into futurity. Weeping and throwing herself at my feet she said to me: "Beware, beware, and touch not that man, for he is holy. Last night I saw him in a vision. He was walking on the waters, he was flying on the wings of the wind. He spoke to the tempest and to the fishes of the lake, all were obedient to him. Behold, the torrent in Mount Kedron flows with blood, the statues of Cæsar are filled with gemoniæ [the rotten bodies of criminals had soiled the statues], an evil portent of things to come; the columns of the inner [of the Temple] have given away [instead of interium, a word that does not exist, translated perhaps from the Latin 'in interiorem'], and the sun is veiled in mourning like a vestal in the tomb. Ah! Pilate, evil awaits thee. If thou wilt not listen to the vows of thy wife, dread the curse of a Roman Senate, dread the frowns of Cæsar."

By this time the marble stairs groaned under the weight of the multitude. The Nazarene was brought back to me. I proceeded to the halls of justice, followed by my guard, and asked the crowd in a severe tone what they demanded. "The death of the Nazarene", was the reply. "For what crime?" "He has blasphemed. He has prophesied the ruin of the Temple. He calls himself the Son of God, the Messiah, the King of the Jews." "Roman justice", said I, "punishes not such offences with death." "Crucify him! Crucify him!", [cried the relentless rabble].

The vociferations of the infuriated mob shook the palace to its foundations. There was but one who appeared to be calm in the midst of the vast multitude. It was the Nazarene. After many fruitless attempts to protect him from the fury of his merciless persecutors, I adopted a measure that at the time appeared to me to be the only one that could save his life. [I] proposed, as it was their custom to deliver a prisoner on such occasions, to release Jesus and let him go free, that he might be the scapegoat, as they call it. But they said Jesus must be crucified.



I then spoke to them of the inconsistency of their course as being incompatible with their law, that requires that no criminal judge can pass sentence on a criminal unless he had fasted one whole day, and that the sentence must have the consent of the [whole] Sanhedrin, and the signature of the president of that court, that no criminal can be executed on the same day his sentence was fixed. And the next day, on the day of his execution, the Sanhedrin is required to review the whole proceeding. Also, according to their own law, a man has to be stationed at the door of the court with a flag, and another a short way off on horseback to cry the name of the criminal and his crime, and the names of his witnesses, and to ascertain if any person can testify in his favor. Moreover, the prisoner on his way to the place of execution has the right to turn back three times, and to plead any new thing in his favor. I urged all these pleas, hoping they might awe them into subjection, but they still cried: “Crucify him! Crucify him!”[]

Note: There were precise rules to be followed by the Bet Din (court of justice) to pronounce the death penalty, in this case on account of a ‘zaken mamre’ (rebellious teacher). However, a zaken mamre was not liable to the death penalty unless it concerned an ordained teacher, which Jesus was not. The points mentioned by Pilate are valid and there are more. On 27 counts, in the case of capital punishment, the Supreme Bet Din violated those rules. To name an important one: Caiaphas tore his clothes when Jesus affirmed that He was the Son of God. (Mt. 26:65) This broke the rule that a judgement should be pronounced in calm and serenity. It is preposterous to assume Reverend Mahan was aware of those rules. Even today, these considerations are hardly known and they are not on the Internet. Continuation of our note at the end of the Acta.

I then ordered Jesus to be scourged, []hoping this might satisfy them, but it only increased their fury.[] I then called for a basin, and washed my hands in the presence of the []clamorous[] multitude, []thus testifying that in my judgement Jesus of Nazareth had done nothing deserving of death[], but my action was in vain. It was his life these wretches thirsted for!

Often in our civil commotions have I witnessed the furious anger of the multitude, but nothing can be compared to what I witnessed on this occasion. It might have been truly said that all the phantoms of the infernal regions had assembled at Jerusalem. The crowd appeared not to walk, but to be borne off and whirled as a vortex, rolling along in living waves from the portals of the prætorium, even unto Mount Zion, with howling screams, shrieks, and vociferations such as were never heard in the seditions of the Pannonia, or in the tumults of the Forum []Romanum[].

Note: The Pannonia was a Roman province in present-day Hungary, known for the Great Illyrian Revolt under Emperor Tiberius.

The Forum Romanum was the teeming heart of ancient Rome: the site of triumphal processions and elections; the venue for public speeches, criminal trials, and gladiatorial matches; and the nucleus of commercial affairs.

By degrees the day darkened like a winter's twilight, such as had been at the death of the great Julius Cæsar. It was likewise the Ides of March [the first new moon of March which marks the awakening of nature.] I, the continued governor of a rebellious province, was leaning against a column of my Basilica, contemplating athwart the dreary gloom of these fiends of Tartarus while they were dragging to execution the innocent Nazarene. [Tártaros is the deep abyss that is used as a dungeon of torment and suffering for the wicked.] All around me was deserted, Jerusalem had vomited forth her indwellers through the funeral gate that leads to gemoniæ. [These are the stairs leading into the river Tiber in Rome, where corpses of criminals were being displayed before they were dragged down.] An air of desolation and sadness enveloped me. My guards had joined the cavalry, and the Centurion, with a display of power, was endeavoring to keep order. I was left alone, and my breaking heart admonished me that what was passing at that moment appertained rather to the history of the gods than that of men. A loud clamor was heard proceeding from Golgotha, which, borne on the winds, seemed to announce an agony such as was never heard by mortal ears. Dark clouds lowered over the pinnacle of the Temple and setting over the city, covered it as with a veil. So dreadful were the signs that men saw both in the heavens and on the earth that Dionysius the Areopagite is reported to have exclaimed: "Either the author of nature is suffering or the universe is falling apart." [Whilst these appalling scenes of nature were transpiring there was a dreadful earthquake in lower Egypt, which filled everybody with fear, and scared the superstitious Jews almost to death. It is said Balthasar, an aged and learned Jew of Antioch, was found dead after the excitement was over. Whether he died from alarm or grief is not known. He was a strong friend of the Nazarene.] ["So dreadful were the signs etc." should rather be placed here.]

Near the first hour of the night I threw my mantle around me, and went down into the city toward the gates of Golgotha. The sacrifice was consummated. The crowd was returning home, still agitated, it is true, but gloomy, taciturn, and desperate. What they had witnessed had stricken them with terror and remorse. I also saw my little Roman cohort pass by mournfully, the standard-bearer having veiled his eagle in token of grief, and I overheard some of the Jewish soldiers murmuring strange words which I did not understand. Others were recounting miracles very like those which have so often smitten the Romans by the will of the gods. Sometimes groups of men and women would halt, then, looking back toward Mount Calvary, would remain motionless in expectation of witnessing some new prodigy.

I returned to the prætorium, sad and pensive. On ascending the stairs – the steps of which were still stained with the blood of the Nazarene – I perceived an old man in a suppliant posture, and behind him several Romans in tears. He threw himself at my feet and wept most bitterly. It is painful to see an old man weep, [and my heart being already overcharged with grief, we, though strangers, wept together.

And in truth it seemed that the tears lay very shallow that day with many whom I perceived in the vast concourse of people. I never witnessed such an extreme revulsion of feeling. Those who betrayed and sold him, those who testified against him, those who cried: "Crucify him, we have his blood", all slunk on like cowardly curse, and washed their teeth with vinegar. As I am told that Jesus taught a resurrection and a separation after death – if such should be the fact – I am sure it commenced in this vast crowd.[] "Father" – said I to him, after gaining control of my feelings – "who are you, and what is your request?" "I am Joseph of Arimathea", replied he, "and am come to beg of you upon my knees the permission to bury Jesus of Nazareth." "Your prayer is granted", said I to him. And at the same time I ordered Manlius to take some soldiers with him to superintend the interment, lest it should be profaned.

A few days later the sepulchre was found empty. His disciples proclaimed all over the country that Jesus had risen from the dead, as he had foretold. []This created more excitement even than the Crucifixion! As to its truth I cannot say for certain, but I have made some investigation into the matter. So you can examine for yourself and see if I am at fault, as Herod tries to present things. Joseph [of Arimathea] buried Jesus in his own tomb. Whether he contemplated his resurrection or calculated to cut him an other [tomb], I cannot tell. The day after he was buried one of the priests came to the prætorium and said they were apprehensive that his disciples intended to steal the body of Jesus and hide it, and then make it appear that he had risen from the dead, as he had foretold, of which [that he had said so] they were perfectly aware. I sent him to the captain of the royal guard (Malcus) to tell him to take Jewish soldiers, place as many around the sepulchre as required and then, if anything should happen, they could only blame themselves, and not the Romans.

When the great excitement arose about the sepulchre being found empty, I felt a deeper solicitude than ever. I sent for Malcus, who told me he had placed his lieutenant, Ben Isham, with one hundred soldiers, around the sepulchre. He told me that Isham and the soldiers were very much alarmed at what had occurred there that morning. I sent for this man Isham, who related to me, as near as I can recollect, the following circumstances: He said that at about the beginning of the fourth watch, they saw a soft and beautiful light over the sepulchre. He at first thought that the women had come to embalm the body of Jesus, as was their custom, but he could not see how they had gotten through the guards. While these thoughts were passing through his mind, behold, the whole place was lighted up, and there seemed to be crowds of the dead in their graveclothes. All seemed to be shouting and filled with ecstasy, while all around and above was the most beautiful music he had ever heard. The whole air seemed to be full of voices praising God. At this time there seemed to be a reeling and swimming of the earth, so that he turned so sick and faint that he could not stand on his feet. He said, the earth seemed to swim

from under him. His senses left him, so that he knew not what did occur. I asked him in what condition he was when he came to himself. He said he was lying on the ground with his face down. I asked him if he could not have been mistaken as to the light. Was it not day that was coming in the East? He said at first he thought of that, but at a stone's cast it was exceedingly dark, and then he remembered it was too early for day. I asked him if his dizziness might not have come from being wakened up and getting up too suddenly, as it sometimes has that effect. He said he was not, that he had not been asleep all night, as the penalty is death for him to sleep on duty. He said he had let some of the soldiers sleep for a (short) time. Some were asleep then. I asked him how long the scene lasted. He said he did not know, but he thought nearly an hour. He said it was hid by the light of day. I asked him if he went to the sepulchre after he had come to himself. He said no, because he was afraid. Just as soon as relief came they all went to their quarters. I asked him if he had been questioned by the priests. He said he had been. They wanted him to say it was an earthquake and that they were asleep. They offered him money to say that the disciples came and stole Jesus, but he saw no disciples. He did not know that the body was gone until he was told. I asked him about the private opinion of those priests he had conversed with. He said that some of them thought that Jesus was no man, that he was not a human being, that he was not the son of Mary, that he was not the same that was said to be born of the virgin in Bethlehem, that the same person had been on earth previously together with Abraham and Lot, and such at many times and places.

It seems to me that, if the Jewish theory be true, these conclusions are correct, for they are in accord with this man's life, as is known and testified by both friends and foes, for the elements meant no more in his hands than the clay in the hands of the potter. He could convert water into wine. He could change death into life, disease into health. He could calm the seas, still the storms, call up fish with a silver coin in its mouth. Now, I say, if he could do all these things, which he did, and many more, as the Jews all testify – in doing these things he created enmity against himself, for he was not charged with criminal offenses nor violating any law, nor of wronging any individual in person, and all these facts are known to thousands, as well by friends and foes – then I am almost ready to say, as did Manlius at the cross: "Truly this was the Son of God."

Now, noble Sovereign, this is as near the facts in the case as I can arrive at. I have taken pains to make the statement very full, so that you may judge of my conduct upon the whole, as I hear that Antipater has said many hard things of me in this matter.[]

*With the promise of faithfulness  
and good wishes to my Noble Sovereign,*

*I am your most obedient servant,  
PONTIUS PILATE. []*

CONTINUATION NOTE (see page 155):

*"I, Pontius Pilate, then spoke to them of the inconsistency of their course as being incompatible with their law."* Subsequently he mentions 9 procedural infractions, but there were 27, as explained in detail in "Valeur de l'assemblée qui prononça la peine de mort contre Jésus-Christ" by Augustin and Joseph Lémann # 1876 (Status of the Assembly that pronounced the death sentence on Jesus Christ). Augustin Lémann refers to it again in his book of 1909, which is used here.

Monsignor Augustin Lémann (1836-1909) was a French Catholic priest, and the twin brother of Joseph Lémann. Raised in a wealthy Ashkenazi Jewish family in Lyon, they converted to Catholicism together at the age of 18 and were ordained priests at 24.

The book from which I quote is called: "Histoire complète de l'idée messianique chez le peuple d'Israël" (Complete history of the messianic idea among the People of Israel) by Monsignor Canon Augustin Lémann, prelate of the House of Holiness in Rome, Professor of Holy Scripture and Hebrew at the Catholic Faculties of Lyon # 1909 (pp. 426-27):

In their 'acts', that is to say in their way of proceeding, we have observed incredible enormities, TWENTY-SEVEN IRREGULARITIES, only one of which is enough to overturn the judgment! (...) Certainly, Jesus cannot be an ordinary man; the strange procedure followed in his regard is proof of this. When, in a trial, an irregularity is discovered, it obviously does not lead to the justification of the accused, which may be the effect of inadvertence or chance. But, when in the entire framework of a procedure, when from one end of a judicial session to the other one sees evolving in succession TWENTY-SEVEN IRREGULARITIES, all serious, all scandalous, all stubbornly agreed to, isn't there irrefutable proof that the accused, victim of such procedures, was a person out of the ordinary? Who was this mysterious accused?...

On the day that He made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem (it was five days before his trial), Jews from afar attended the Passover feasts; they had come from the lands of the Parthians, Media, Persia, Mesopotamia, of the Pontus, of Phrygia, of all the known plateaus of Asia, of the borders of Libya, of Cyrenaica, of Crete, of Egypt, of Arabia, of Rome; these Jews who witnessed the spectacle of his triumph as well as the popular effervescence, were wondering, each one in his own language: "Who 'is' this one!?"

I like to draw your attention to the Talmud (Sanh. 43a – ancient editions):

«« It was taught: On the eve of Passover Yeshu the Nazarene was hung. [Yeshu is an acronym for: that his name and memory be blotted out] (...) A herald went forth and cried: *"He is going forth to be stoned because he has practised sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Anyone who can say anything in his favour, let him come forward and plead on his behalf."* But since nothing was brought forward in his favour he has been hanged on the eve of Passover. »»

This proves three things, that first of all Pilate was right in mentioning it, that it should have been done, but it was not. And secondly, that the Sanhedrin was a complicit in the conviction and hanging (on the Cross) of Jesus, a fact which Jews vehemently deny in their discussions with Christians, stressing that it was the Romans who planned it all and did it. And thirdly, it reaffirms the historicity of Jesus' Crucifixion, which nowadays is being denied by many.

## — INTRODUCTION —

**A CORRECT TRANSCRIPT OF PILATE’S COURT**

*Closely resembling the Acta Pilati, published after Mahan had visited Rome.*

In 1879 Reverend William Dennes Mahan published a pamphlet of thirty-three pages entitled “A Correct Transcript of Pilate’s Court - as taken from Tiberius Cæsars’ records in the Vatican at Rome, giving a correct account of the apprehension, trial and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth”, to be called only “Acta Pilati” in later editions. Rev. Mahan told that he had paid for the translation in English of the original Latin manuscript, kept at the Vatican, via his contacts. After having personally visited the Vatican in 1883, he was able get hold of the original and had it translated on that basis again; and it is this version that appeared in his publications ever since, first in “The archaeological writings of the Sanhedrim and Talmuds of the Jews”, in 1884, and afterwards in the book, from then on called “The Archko Volume”, first published in 1887 and often reprinted afterwards. While Pilate’s Court from 1879, in itself was more than satisfactory, Mahan claimed that seeing the original at the Vatican allowed the expansion of what he’d first published; there were some deletions too. And so the Acta Pilati is more than 1500 words longer than its predecessor, or +45%; and the translation work appears to be of a higher quality.

In 1941 Dr. Edgar Goodspeed said to have discovered an 1842 pamphlet (that strangely enough cannot be found on the Internet), published in Boston that, so he said, closely resembles Pilate’s Court, and it referred to a Latin manuscript in Vienne. It was called “Pontius Pilate’s Account of the Condemnation of Jesus Christ, and his own Mental Sufferings”. This was supposedly extracted from an old Latin manuscript, then reported to be “*recently found at Vienne*”. Dr. Goodspeed could not tell where this earlier pamphlet originated from; according to Goodspeed, it came with no notice of an author or publisher. And so the accusation was quickly made that it served to reproduce Pilate’s Court. It looked as if it was a full-blown example of plagiarism. Then, in the 1980s, Per Erik Beskow claimed that this Boston pamphlet had to be based on the French publication by Joseph Méry: “Ponce Pilate à Vienne” (Pontius Pilate in Vienne), a short story first published in “La Revue de Paris” in 1837, republished by Joseph Méry in 1840 as part of his “Les Nuits de Londres” (The nights of London) and again in 1860 as part of his “Contes et Nouvelles” (Stories and news), all three exactly identical. Beskow (1926-2016) was a Swedish Biblical scholar, church historian, and an associate professor at Lund University in Sweden. In 1985 he published “Strange Tales” (Fortress Press, Philadelphia), which is a collection of essays and researches into modern apocrypha. He writes:

«« As Goodspeed has shown, Mahan unabashedly plagiarized an existing story, and I am happy to have identified the original author: it was the French dramatist Joseph Méry (1798–1867). (...) The original story “Ponce Pilate à Vienne”, was published in “La Revue de Paris” in 1837; a comparison with Mahan’s ‘manuscript’ reveals a literal agreement in every detail, except where the text has been distorted by mistranslations or misreadings. »» (pp. 53-54)

It is therefore important to scrutinize both documents, which is done here. Indeed Méry’s story shows many similarities with Pilate’s Court, but also a number of important differences. Méry states in the preamble that he could write the story by means of an old Latin manuscript; strangely, the manuscript never showed up, but that was on purpose, as I will show. Mahan has been accused by Beskow to have created correspondence to demonstrate that he was the discoverer of the manuscript, but this accusation is groundless, for if Mahan used an old Latin manuscript at the Vatican, then it’s not the same that ‘presumably’ Méry discovered in France. And why can’t we say that Mahan saw the original and not a copy? In ancient times the copying of important documents was painstakingly carried out, and so it is to be expected to find the same Acta Pilati at several locations.

Méry says that for the writing “Pontius Pilate in Vienne”, he was ‘inspired’ by an old Latin manuscript; he invented the story of Pilate’s suicide out of thin air and of his aide de camp Longinus who witnessed it – and therefore he used the word inspired. I do believe he used a Latin manuscript, but was not allowed to disseminate it. In Vienne, there is a Roman monument, an ugly mausoleum, of which legend says that Pilate is buried there. Vienne lies along the Rhône River, less than 30 km south of Lyon, at the Route nationale 7, or ‘RN 7’.

Méry starts his story as follows: «« There are cities whose names seem to carry with them something mysterious. In France, we have Vienne la Dauphinoise, close to Lyon, which also has its own unique physiognomy, and which borrows from vague and singular traditions an interest that the traveler feels and cannot define. (...) It appears that the Christian church in Vienne replaced a temple that Brennus had erected in [honor of the Celtic god] Teutates. The Rhône flows in front, with its gracious impetuosity. On its left bank we see an unnamed tomb of strange looking architecture. It is the tomb of Pilate, says tradition; the Pilate under whom Jesus Christ suffered. We also discover, very close to Vienne, Mount Pilate. What is certain, is that the governor of Judeah died in Vienne under Emperor Caligula. Another Mount Pilate is found in Switzerland; this was bound to give credence to the Swiss that Pilate had died in their country. But let’s be serious, Rome would never have designated Switzerland as the place of exile for an old man who had spent his entire life in the hottest latitudes of the empire. So it was undoubtedly in Vienne that he died. (...) This short preamble is necessary to understand the following chronicle, for which I was inspired by an old Latin manuscript [the Acta Pilati] that I had the opportunity to read last September [in 1836] at the castle of M. V.-S\*\*\*, situated between Vienne and the Toll. »»

Note: The castle of M. V.-S\*\*\* is a riddle, and if one knows the region, an easy one. It points at Château de Fléchères that in itself points at something else; so it is not the end of our quest (the French ‘la flèche’ means arrow). The magnificent castle, the largest in France from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, is situated in between the towns of Maçon (M.) and Villefranche-sur-Saône (V.-S), just north of Lyon. And the three asterisks? A simplified version of the Freemasonic triangle, like this: ∴. Sounds exaggerated? Not for me. It confirms that we are dealing here with a monumental conspiracy against the historicity of the Biblical narrative. Fact is that the Latin document never showed up and that M. V.-S\*\*\* does not clarify, but confuses. And the instruction “*between Vienne and the Toll*” does not help either, because there is no toll house near Vienne. There is a toll in Lyon, nothing spectacular, and Château d’Irigny, at the confines of Lyon, is the only castle between Vienne and Lyon; this insignificant building of the 13<sup>th</sup> century is not known to ever have had a substantial library; today it houses the municipal library. So, “*between Vienne and the Toll*” simply means: ‘look elsewhere’.

The chronicle, inspired by the Acta Pilati, tells an invented story of the days of Pilate before he committed suicide by throwing himself off a cliff. It starts by telling his arrival in Vienne, town to which he supposedly had been exiled by Emperor Caligula. Next, the story continues with the Acta Pilati proper, which is the object of our study, and that part is used for the comparison. The story continues with a description of how Pilate killed himself, but that the reader has to look up in the original on the Internet: “Les Nuits de Londres” T2 (p. 171) / downloadable at Gallica BnF.

To see where the Acta Pilati proper in Méry’s story differs from Pilate’s Court, we merged the two in one, so that people can see for themselves what we are talking about and that Beskow is dead wrong when he writes “*Mahan’s ‘manuscript’ reveals a literal agreement in every detail, except where the text has been distorted by mistranslations or misreadings.*” As the French say: “On dit n’importe quoi.” (What is written in between []boxes[], like this, appears in Pilate’s Court, but is absent in Pontius Pilate in Vienne.)

A CORRECT TRANSCRIPT  
OF  
**PILATE'S COURT**  
AS TAKEN FROM  
TIBERIUS CAESARS' RECORDS IN THE VATICAN  
AT ROME, GIVING A CORRECT ACCOUNT  
OF THE APPREHENSION, TRIAL  
AND CRUCIFIXION OF  
**JESUS OF NAZARETH**

---

**TO THE READER**

---

This transcript was obtained at great expense from Tiberius Cæsar's records, in the Vatican at Rome. It was copied by a monk of great learning; the writing was so fine, old, and timestained that a strong glass was required to enable him to decipher it, it was afterward translated from the Latin to the English language. He certifies it to be a true copy. It is Pilate's account of the most cruel and tragic death of Jesus of Nazareth. I have been so deeply interested that I believed many others would be also, and decided to place it within reach of all.

REV. W. D. MAHAN

The following text allows a comparison between Pilate's Court and Pontius Pilate in Vienne, written by Joseph Méry in 1837 and, quite unusually, republished twice again in different books – Joseph must have fallen in love with his story. Or is there a snag in the grass, that they really wanted it to be found as an additional piece of incriminating evidence?



# ACTA PILATI

To Tiberius Cæsar

Emperor of Rome :

Noble Sovereign, *Greeting* :

The events of the last few days, in my province, have been of such a character, that I thought I would give the details as they have occurred, as I should not be surprised if in the course of time they may change the destiny of our nation, for it seems of late that the gods have ceased to be propitious.

*Here below starts the comparison between  
Pilate's Court and Pilate in Vienne :*

I am almost ready to say "Cursed be the day that I succeeded Valerius Flaccus [Méry: Valerius Gratus] in the government of Judeah." On my arrival at Jerusalem I took possession of the prætorium and ordered a splendid feast to be prepared, to which I invited the Tetrarch of Galilee, [Méry adds: and also the pontif — jurisconsult], along with the High Priest [and his officers]. At the appointed hour no guests appeared. This was an insult offered to my dignity. A few days after the 'High Priest' deigned to pay me a visit [Note: Méry has typing error, because it says Tetrarch instead of High Priest]. His deportment was grave and deceitful. He pretended that his religion forbade him and his attendants to sit at the table of the Romans and to offer up libations with them. I thought it expedient to accept his excuse, but from that moment on I was convinced that the conquered had declared themselves the enemies of the conquerors.

[It seemed to me] of all conquered cities, Jerusalem was the most difficult to govern. So turbulent was the people that I lived in momentary dread of an insurrection. To suppress it I had but a single Centurion and a handful of soldiers. I requested a reinforcement from the Prefect of Syria, who informed me that he had scarcely troops sufficient for the defence [of his own province]. [An insatiate thirst for conquest – to extend our empire beyond the means of defending it – I fear will be the means of overthrowing our noble government.] [Méry: Ah! it is a pity that the empire is so great; we have more conquests than soldiers.]

Among the various rumors 'that came to my ears' [Méry: that circulated every day around my prætorium], there was one that attracted my attention in particular. A young man, 'it was said' [Méry: Public rumor and my secret agents were saying], had appeared in Galilee [Méry: and that he was going by the city and the edges of the lake], preaching with a noble unction [Méry: and a noble austerity of manners], a new law, 'in the name of the gods' [Méry: in the name of God] that had sent him. At first I was apprehensive that his design

was to stir up the people against the Romans [Méry adds: and that his speeches were preparing the revolt], but soon my fears were dispelled. Jesus of Nazareth spoke rather as a friend of the Romans than of the Jews. One day in passing [Méry adds: in litter] by the place of Siloe, where there was a great concourse of people, I observed, in the midst of the group [Méry: groups], a young man who was leaning against a tree, calmly addressing the multitude. I was told it was Jesus. This I could easily have suspected; so great was the difference between him and those who were listening to him. His golden colored hair and beard gave to his appearance a celestial aspect. He appeared to be about thirty years of age. Never have I seen a sweeter or more serene countenance. What a contrast between him and his hearers, with their black beards and tawny complexion!

‘Unwilling to interrupt him by my presence’ [For fear of hampering the freedom of his speech by my presence] I continued my walk; but signified to my secretary to join the group and listen. My secretary’s name was Manlius. He was the grandson of the chief of the conspirators who encamped in Etruria waiting for Catalina. Manlius was an ancient inhabitant of Judeah, and well acquainted with the Hebrew language. He was devoted to me and worthy of my confidence. On entering the prætorium I found Manlius, who related to me the words Jesus had pronounced at Siloe. Never have I heard in the Portico [Note: not Pettico], nor [have I read] in the works of the philosophers anything comparable ‘to the maxims of Jesus’ [to the maxims that arrived at the ears of Manlius]. After one of the rebellious Jews, so numerous in Jerusalem, asked Jesus if it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, he replied: “Render unto Cæsar the things which belong to Cæsar and unto God the things that are God’s.”

It was on account of the wisdom of his saying that I granted so much liberty to the Nazarene. ‘It was in my power to have him arrested and exiled to Pontus’ [It was undoubtedly in my power to have him arrested at his first speech, to embark him on a galley and send him to the Pontus], but this would have been contrary ‘to justice’ [to justice and common sense] which had always characterized the Romans. This man was neither seditious nor rebellious. I extended to him my protection, unknown, perhaps, to himself. He was at liberty to act, to speak, to assemble and ‘address the people’ [to fill every place with his listeners], to choose disciples unrestrained by any prætorian mandate [and let him be followed to the lake, to the desert, to the mountain; and never a court order came to disturb neither the audience nor the speaker.] Should it ever happen – may the gods ever avert the omen – should it ever happen, I say, that the religion of our forefathers be supplanted by the religion of Jesus, it will be to this noble toleration that Rome shall owe her premature obsequies, while I, miserable wretch, shall have been the instrument of what Hebrews call providence, and we, destiny.

Note: A galley is a vessel propelled with up to 170 oarsmen, but usually no more than 50. A trireme had a cruising speed of 7 to 8 knots

that could be sustained for an entire day, and no more than 10 knots at sprinting speed.

But this unlimited freedom granted to Jesus provoked the Jews; not the poor [not those of the polulace], but the rich and powerful. It is true, that Jesus was severe on the latter; ‘and it was a political reason, in my opinion, not to control the liberty of the Nazarene’. [and that was one more political reason for me to let the Nazarene speak freely.] “Scribes and Pharisees”, he would say to them, “you are a race of vipers; you resemble painted sepulchres.” At other times, he would sneer at the proud alms of the publican, telling him ‘that the mite of the poor widow’ [that the mite secretly poured by the poor woman] was more precious in the sight of God. New complaints were daily made ‘at the prætorium’ [at the foot of my tribunal] against the insolence of Jesus. I was even informed that some misfortune would befall him – that it would not be the first time that Jerusalem had stoned those who called themselves prophets – and if the prætorium refused justice, an appeal would be made to Cæsar. [I had taken the lead. I had written letters to Caesar, and the galley of Ptolemais had taken them to Rome]. ‘However, my conduct was approved by the Senate, and I was promised a reinforcement after the termination of the Parthian war.’ [However, I was refused the reinforcement of troops I asked for, or at least they instilled the hope that once the Parthian war had ended, the garrison of Jerusalem would be augmented. It lead me up the garden path, as with us the Parthian wars are never ending.]

Being too weak to repress a sedition, I resolved upon adopting a measure that promised to establish the tranquility of the city, without subjecting the prætorium to a humiliating concession. I invited Jesus, requesting an interview with him at the prætorium. He came. You know that in my veins flows the Spanish, mixed with Roman blood, as incapable of fear as it is of puerile emotion. When the Nazarene made his appearance I was walking in my basilica, and my feet seemed fastened with an iron hand []to the marble pavement and I trembled in every limb as a guilty culprit[] [I thought I heard the gilded bronze shields consecrated to Cæsar groaning in the columns.] Yet he was calm – the Nazarene, calm as innocence. When he came up to me he stopped, and by a signal sign he seemed to say: “I am here.” For some time I contemplated with admiration and awe this extraordinary type of man – a type unknown to our numerous painters, who have given form and figure to all the gods and heroes.

“Jesus”, said I to him at last – and my tongue faltered – “Jesus of Nazareth, I have granted you for the last three years ample freedom of speech, nor do I regret it. Your words are those of a sage. I know not whether you have read Socrates or Plato, but this I know, that there is in your discourses a majestic simplicity that elevates you far above these philosophers. The Emperor is informed of it, and I his humble representative in this country, am glad of having allowed you

that liberty of which you are so worthy. However, I must not conceal from you that your discourses have raised up against you powerful and inveterate enemies. Neither is this surprising. Socrates had his enemies, ‘and he fell a victim of their hatred’ [Méry instead: who killed him]. Yours are doubly incensed against you on account of your sayings, and against me [Pilate’s Court erroneously writes: ‘sayings against me, and on account’] on account of the liberty extended toward you. They even accuse me of being indirectly leagued with you for the purpose of depriving the Hebrews of the little civil power which Rome has left them. My request – I do not say my order – is that you be more circumspect in the future, and more tender in arousing the pride of your enemies, lest they raise against you the stupid populace, ‘and compel me to employ the instruments of justice’. [and compel me to detach from these trophies the ax and the bundles, which must be here [on display] only as an ornament and never as a scarecrow.]

The Nazarene [calmly] replied: “Prince of the earth, your words proceed not from true wisdom. Say to the torrent, stop in the midst of the mountain-gorge [not: home], because it will uproot the trees of the valley. The torrent will answer you, that it must obey the laws of the creator. God alone knows whither flows the torrent. Verily, I say unto you, before the Rose of Sharon blossoms the blood of the Just shall be spilt.”

“Your blood shall not be spilt”, replied I with emotion. “You are more precious in my estimation on account of your wisdom than all the turbulent and proud Pharisees, who abuse the freedom granted them by the Romans, conspire against Cæsar, ‘and construe our bounty into fear’ [and take our kindness for fear]. Insolent wretches, they are not aware that the wolf of the Tiber sometimes clothes himself with the skin of the sheep. I will protect you against them. My prætorium is open to you as an asylum; it is a sacred asylum.”

Jesus carelessly shook his head and said, with a grace and a divine smile [with a smile of divine grace]: “When the day shall have come, there will be no asylum for the Son of Man, neither on the earth nor under the earth. The asylum of the Just is there” – pointing to the Heavens. “That which is written in the books of the prophets must be accomplished.”

“Young man”, answered I, mildly, “you oblige me to convert my request into an order [into an order, now]. The safety of the Province which has been confided to my care requires it. You must observe more moderation in your discourses. Do not infringe on my ‘orders’ [wishes] [Pilate’s Court erroneously writes: ‘Do not infringe. My orders you know’]. [You know my intentions.] May happiness attend you. Farewell.” [As I said this, my voice descended from severity to tone of gentleness. A sharp word could not find a way to exhale

before this extraordinary man, who calmed the storms of the lake with a nod, as his disciples testified.]

“Prince of the earth”, replied Jesus, “I come not to bring war into the world, but [peace,] love and charity. I was born the same day on which Augustus Cæsar gave peace to the Roman world. Persecution proceeds not from me. ‘I expect it from others’ [I expect it from others and I do not run away from it], and will meet it in obedience to the will of my Father, who has shown me the way. Restrain, therefore, your ‘worldly’ [senseless] prudence. It is not in your power to stop the victim [not: ‘to arrest’ – as in Pilate’s Court] at the foot of the tabernacle of expiation.” So saying he disappeared, like a bright shadow, behind the curtains of the basilica.

Note: Méry’s inclusion here: «« I sat in thought for a long time, searching in my head how I would calm the storm I saw looming on the horizon. But what more could I do? You had to endure fate. The Tetrarch, who then reigned in Judeah, and who died devoured by worms, was a fool and a wicked man. The guardians of the law had chosen this Herod to make him the instrument of their hatred. It was to him that the entire enemy cohort turned, to seek revenge on the Nazarene. »» Evidently, this is not present in the Latin manuscript, because the Tetrarch Herod Antipas only died in 39 AD.

If, as Goodspeed thought, Pilate’s Court was a transcript of the Boston pamphlet, which unfortunately is unavailable (at least on the Internet), and if this pamphlet faithfully had copied Méry’s story, then Mahan would have copied it too – in case the accusation is true, which I don’t believe – for his intellect would not have recognized that this inclusion is an anachronism. Yet, as long as the Boston pamphlet is unavailable, we are groping in the dark.

[To Herod, who then reigned in Galilee, Jesus’ enemies addressed themselves to wreak their vengeance on the Nazarene.] Had Herod consulted his own inclination, he would have ordered Jesus immediately to be put to death; but, though proud of his royal dignity, yet he was afraid [in this instance] of committing an act that might diminish his influence with the ‘Senate’ [Méry instead: Cæsar].

Herod called on me one day at the prætorium, and on rising [from his seat] to take leave, after some insignificant conversation [in order to hide the true object of his visit], he asked me [casually] for my opinion concerning the Nazarene. I replied that Jesus appeared to be one of those great philosophers that great nations sometimes produce, that his doctrines were by no means sacrilegious, and that the intention of Rome was to leave him to that freedom of speech [of action and speech], [which was justified by his actions]. Herod smiled maliciously, and saluting me with an ironical respect, he departed.

The great feast of the Jews was approaching, and the intention was to avail themselves of the popular exultation which always manifests itself at the solemnities of a Passover. The city was overflowing with

a tumultuous populace clamoring for the death of the Nazarene. My emissaries informed me that the treasure of the Temple had been employed in bribing the people. The danger was pressing. A Roman Centurion had been insulted. [They had broken his vine]. I wrote to 'the Prefect of Syria' [Méry instead: Ptolemee] for a hundred foot-soldiers, and as many cavalry. 'He declined.' [Méry instead: The Prefect persisted in his first refusal.] I saw myself alone, with a handful of veterans, in the midst of a rebellious city, too weak to suppress a disorder, and having no other choice left but to tolerate it. They had seized upon Jesus; and the seditious rabble, although they had nothing to fear from the prætorium, believing with their leaders that I winked at their sedition, 'continued vociferating' [and the populace rushed in the footsteps of the Nazarene, instead of 'continued vociferating']: "Crucify him! Crucify him." ["That they take hold of him and crucify him!"]

Three powerful parties had combined together at that time against Jesus. First the Herodians and the Sadducees, whose seditious conduct seemed to have proceeded from double motives. They hated the Nazarene, and were impatient of the Roman yoke. They could never forgive me for having entered the holy city with banners that bore the image of the Roman Emperor, and, although in this instance 'I had committed a fatal error' [I had made a disastrous concession to them], yet the sacrilege did not appear less heinous in their eyes. Another grievance also rankled in their bosoms. I had proposed to employ a part of the treasure of the Temple in erecting edifices of public utility. My proposal was scowled at. The Pharisees were the avowed enemies of Jesus. They cared not for the government [Méry instead: governor]. They bore with bitterness the severe reprimands which the Nazarene for three years had been continually throwing out against them wherever he went. Too weak and pusillanimous to act by themselves, they had embraced the quarrels of the Herodians and the Sadducees. Besides these three parties, I had to contend against 'the reckless and profligate populace' [that mass of lost people], always ready to join a sedition, and to profit by the disorder 'and confusion that resulted therefrom' [and to drink blood, instead of: 'and confusion etc.'].]

Jesus was dragged 'before the High Priest' [before the council of priests], and condemned to death. It was then that the High Priest, Caiaphas, performed a derisory act of submission. He sent his prisoner to me to pronounce his condemnation, and secure his execution. I answered him that as Jesus was a Galilean, 'the affair came in Herod's jurisdiction' [Méry instead: it did not concern me, instead of 'the affair etc.'], and ordered him to be sent hither [and I sent Jesus back to Herod]. The wily Tetrarch professed humility, and protesting his preference to the Lieutenant of Cæsar [Méry has a better translation: he avowed his deference to Cæsar's deputy] he committed the fate of the man to my hands. Soon my palace assumed the aspect of a besieged citadel [by an army]. Every moment the number of the

seditionists increased. Jerusalem was inundated with crowds from the mountains of Nazareth [from the town of Galilee, and from the plain of Esdrelon]. All Judeah appeared to be pouring 'into the devoted city' [into Jerusalem].

I had taken a wife – a girl from among the Gauls – 'who professed' [who like the girls of her nation was able] to see into futurity, weeping and throwing herself at my feet. "Beware", said she to me, "beware, and touch not that man, for he is holy. Last night I saw him in a vision. He was walking on the waters. He was flying on the wings of the winds. He spoke to the tempest [to the palms of the desert] and to the fishes of the lake – 'all were obedient to him' [all answered him]. Behold! The torrent in Mount Kedron flows with blood, the statues of Cæsar 'are filled with gemoniæ' [seemed to me soiled by the mire of the gemoniæ]. The columns of 'the interim' [prætorium] have given away, and the sun is veiled in mourning, like a vestal in the tomb. O Pilate! 'evil awaits thee if thou wilt not listen to the vows of thy wife'. [in the future you should dread etc.] Dread the curse of the [Roman] Senate, dread the power of Cæsar [against the coward proconsul]." [Note: Pilate was not entitled to be called proconsul, only prefect.]

By this time the marble stairs groaned under the weight of the multitude. The Nazarene was brought back to me. I proceeded to the hall of justice, followed by my guard, and asked the people in a severe tone what they demanded. "The death of the Nazarene", 'was their reply' [they shouted]." For what crime?" [What is the crime of the Nazarene?] "He has blasphemed. He has prophesied the ruin of the Temple. He calls himself the Son of God, the Messiah, the King of the Jews." "Roman justice", said I, "punishes not such offences with death." "Crucify him, crucify him!" ["That they take hold of him and crucify him!"] belched forth the relentless rabble.

The vociferations [of the infuriated mob] shook the palace to its foundations. There was but one who appeared to be calm 'in the midst of the vast multitude' [in the midst of that scene]. It was the Nazarene. [It looked like the statue of Innocence in the temple of the Eumenides — The Eumenides is a famous play from the Greek playwright Aeschylus.] After many fruitless attempts to protect him from this fury of his merciless persecutors, I adopted a measure which, at the moment, appeared to me to be the only one that could save his life. [Méry instead: After many fruitless attempts to snatch him from the power of this multitude which had made itself sovereign, I had the damnable weakness to adopt a measure which could save his life.] I ordered him to be scourged, then calling for an ewer, I washed my hands in the presence of the multitude [who could not hear my voice], thereby signifying to them my disapproval of the deed. But in vain. It was his life that these wretches thirsted for! Often in our civil commotions have I witnessed the furious animosity of the multitude, but nothing could be compared to what I witnessed in the present

instance. It might have been truly said, that on this occasion all the phantoms of the infernal regions had assembled at Jerusalem. [Méry, instead of 'the infernal regions': Tenaro — Cape Tenaron is situated at the southernmost point of mainland Greece and, according to mythology, is the gateway to Hades or Hell; the saying 'Tenarian evil' meant a great and unlawful evil.] [Those faces, which paraded in front of me, were red with sweat of blood and lit up with a sulphurous reflection.] The crowd appeared not to walk: they were borne off, and whirled as a [luminous] vortex, rolling along like living waves, from the portals of the *prætorium* even unto Mount Zion, with howlings, screams, shrieks [and vociferations], such as were never heard in the seditions of the Pannonia, or in the tumult of the Forum.

By degrees the day darkened like a winter's twilight, such as had been at the death of the great Julius Cæsar. It was likewise towards the ides of March. I, the continued governor of a rebellious province, was leaning against a column of my basilica, contemplating athwart the dreary gloom of these fiends of tartars dragging to execution the innocent Nazarene. [Méry: instead of 'fiends of tartars', he writes *Théorie du Tartare* (?) — Tartars were Mongols, a warlike and impetuous people and *Tártaros* is the deep abyss that is used as a dungeon of torment and suffering for the wicked.] All around me [instead of 'me': the town] was deserted. Jerusalem had vomited forth her indwellers through the funeral gate that leads to the *Gemoniæ*. [Note: Mahan writes *Gemonica*, but Méry writes in both instances the French word 'gémonies', and that seems correct.] An air of desolation and sadness enveloped me. My guards had joined the cavalry, and the Centurion to display a shadow of power, was endeavoring to keep order. I was left alone, and my breaking heart admonished me that what was passing at that moment appertained rather to the history of the gods than that of man. A loud clamor was heard proceeding from Golgotha, which borne on the winds seemed to announce an agony such as had never been heard by mortal ears. 'Dark clouds lowered over the pinnacle of the Temple and settling over the city' [Méry instead: and their broad strands descended over the city], and covered it with a veil. So dreadful were the signs that were seen, both in the heavens and on the earth that Dionysius the Areopagite is reported to have exclaimed: "Either the author of nature is suffering 'or the universe is falling apart'." [or the whole mechanism of the world is falling apart]

Toward the first hour of the night I threw my mantle around me and went down into the city, 'toward the gates of Golgotha' [near the Golgotha gate]. The sacrifice was consummated. [The attitude of the people was no longer the same.] The crowd was returning home, still agitated, it is true; but gloomy, taciturn and desperate. What they had witnessed had stricken them with terror and remorse. I also saw my little Roman cohort pass by mournfully, the standard bearer having veiled his eagle in token of grief, and I overheard some of the soldiers murmuring strange words, which I did not understand. Others were



recounting prodigies almost similar to those which had so often smitten the Romans by the will of the gods. Sometimes groups of [weeping] men and women would halt [on this painful road] then looking backward towards Mount Calvary [the mount of torture], and would remain motionless in expectation of witnessing some new prodigy.

I returned to the prætorium, 'sad and pensive' [instead: harboring in the bosom all the desolation of this crowd]. On ascending the stairs I perceived [in the glow of lightning] – the [marble] steps still stained with the blood of the Nazarene – an old man in a suppliant posture, and behind him several women in tears [whose sobs I heard only, for the shadow veiled their faces]. He threw himself at my feet and wept 'bitterly' [profusely]. It is painful to see an old man weep. "Father", said I to him mildly, "[who are you, and] what is your request?" "I am Joseph of Arimathea", replied he, "and am come to beg of you, upon my knees, the permission to bury Jesus of Nazareth." [I raised the old man.] "Your prayer is granted", said I to him, and at the same time ordered Manlius to take some soldiers with him to superintend the interment, lest it should be profaned. A few days after, the sepulchre was found empty. His disciples published all over [the country] that 'Jesus' [instead: their master] had risen [from the dead], as he had foretold.

Note: The subsequent publications by Mahan are different: "...an old man in a suppliant posture, and behind him several Romans in tears."

What follows is not reproduced in the subsequent publications:

A last duty remained for me to perform and that was to communicate to you these deplorable events. [I did it in great detail, I hid nothing.] 'I did it' [I wrote this letter] on the same night that followed the fatal catastrophe, and had just finished the communication [when day began to dawn]. At that moment the sound of clarions, playing the air of Diana, struck my ear. Casting my eye towards the Cæsarean gate, I beheld a troop of soldiers, and heard at a distance other trumpets sounding Cæsars march. It was the reinforcement that had been promised me. Two thousand chosen troops who, to hasten their arrival, had marched all night. "It has been decreed by the fates", cried I, wringing my hands, "that the great iniquity should be accomplished; that for the purpose of averting the deeds of yesterday, troops should arrive today! Cruel [and ironic] destiny, [how thou sportest with the affairs of mortals!]" It was but too true, what the Nazarene exclaimed [while writhing] on the cross: "All is consummated!"

Ad finem

*Here, Joseph Méry continues his story, telling about Pilatus' attitude toward the Jews, who he started to hate, and also about the commotion that the above report caused in Rome. Méry continues with the details of how Pilate commits suicide, nearby Vienne, place where according to legend he is buried under an ugly structure, which they call Pyramid, but the thing hardly deserves the name.*

**CHAPTER IX - ARCHKOVOLUME**

**HEROD ANTIPATER's DEFENCE BEFORE  
THE ROMAN SENATE IN REGARD TO  
HIS CONDUCT AT BETHLEHEM**

ON a scroll in the library of the Vatican I find the following record, marked "Herod Antipater's Defence".

Noble Romans: In the case whereof I am accused, these Jews are of all people the most superstitious, and no more to be trusted than the Hindoos [Indian people].

They have taught themselves to believe in but one God, who dwells in another world, so they can neither see nor hear Him, nor in any way approach Him by their senses. They believe that He is unchangeable and unapproachable and that He can only manifest himself through some angel or spirit, or some light, or the thunder, or any strange and uncommon phenomenon. Hence, they are so superstitious that they can be made to believe anything.

In order that you may know what kind of people I have to deal with, I will give you some of their maxims: When the sun shines they say their God smiles; when it is cloudy they say He frowns; when it thunders they say He is angry, and they hide themselves; when it rains they say He weeps. And there are many other similar sayings. Now, my lords, you can see at once how far this people might be led, if they could be made to believe that this strange God is at their head and takes up their cause.

Now, as a foundation for all this foolishness, they have a book, and a set of men, called priests, who read and expound this book to them, and they will believe anything these priests tell them. To show how far they may be led, these priests tell them that some thousands of years ago one Moses died, and went to where this strange God dwelt. He was gone forty days, and when he came back he brought this book, which was written by this God for their government. Now, to prove the whole thing is a forgery, the book is wholly for the benefit of the priests. The poor have to work and toil continually, and pay half what they make, and sometimes almost starve to support the lazy priests and furnish them and their women with plenty of fine garments, and wine, and the best of food. The priests tell these poor Jews that this God requires them to bring the best calf, the best lamb, and the best flour and oil to the Temple, to offer in sacrifice; and the priests and their party get all this for themselves. I often tell them, when they object to the Roman taxation, that they could keep up a thousand Cæsars for much less than it costs to keep up their God and his priests.

The leaders are always quarrelling and fighting among themselves, and dividing off in different sects. Miracles are as common as poor physicians. The Essenes are noted for both. They prophesy, work miracles, see visions, and have dreams, and stand in reputation as quack doctors. They pretend to know all about angels, ghosts, and spirits; they profess the art of managing ethereal citizens of transatmospheric regions. They live together in colonies, some of them are cenobitic and some are celibate communities. They maintain that all of them are priests and high priests. Therefore, they daily practice baptisms when as priests on duty. They wear the Levitical garments. Their tables are their altars, and their meals their only sacrifices. With this sanctimonious misanthropy, which is their highest virtue, they use the allegorical method of expounding the Scripture.

While we think, and reason, and reflect, and use our faculties to obtain our ideas of duty, they shut their eyes and fold their hands, waiting to be endued with power from their God. And when they get it, it proves to be all to their own advantage and interest, to the ruin of their fellow citizens. The Sadducees are another party, equally absurd. They get their doctrine from Antigonus Sochseus, who presided the Sanhedrin. They reject all the traditions of the scribes and pharisees. Then we find the sopher, or scribe. They are the writers and expounders of the law. The pharisees [derived from ‘pharash’, to separate] separate from all men on account of their sanctity. But it is useless to name all these sects, with their peculiar views, each differing from the other. They are all strict monotheists, yet they differ from each other more than the polytheists do.

I have given this detailed description of the people and their various sects so that the Senate may have an idea of the situation I find myself in. If you could be here and see and associate with them as I do, to see them with all their sanctity of life and then behold their treachery to each other, see how they lie and steal from each other and see how low and base are their priests, you would be in a much better position to judge my actions.

As to this great excitement at Bethlehem, three strange fantastic looking men called on my guards at the gate and asked where was the newborn babe who was to be the King of the Jews. My guards told me of it, and I ordered the men to be brought into court. I asked them who they were. One of them said he was from Egypt. I asked what was their business. He said they were in search of the babe that was born to rule the Jews. I told them that I ruled the Jews under Augustus Cæsar. But he said this babe would rule when I was gone. I told him, not unless he was born under the purple. I asked him how he knew of this babe. He said they had all had a dream the same night about it. I told them that the devil plays with our brains when we are asleep. He drew a parchment roll from his bosom and read in the Hebrew language: “But thou, Bethlehem, though you are small among the kingdoms of the world, out of thee will come for me one who will be

ruler over all people.” I asked him who wrote that. He said the God of heaven. I asked him where he got that parchment. He said it was the law of the Covenant of the Jews. He also said a star had travelled before them all the way to Jerusalem. I told him his God was mistaken, that Bethlehem was not a kingdom, neither was it the least in the Kingdom of Judeah. I told them that they were superstitious fanatics, and ordered them out of my presence.

But the excitement grew until it became intense. I found nothing could control it. I called the Hillel Court, which was the most learned body of talent in Jerusalem. They read out of their laws that Jesus was to be born of a virgin in Bethlehem, that he was to rule all nations, and all the kingdoms of the world were to be subject to him, and that his kingdom should never end, but his appointees should continue this rule forever. I found this court just as sanguine as those strangers, and, in fact, it was in everybody’s mouth. I thought, I could discover already a sort of deriding and mocking spirit among the lower classes in regard to the Roman authority. Now, it is my opinion that the scene that occurred at Bethlehem was nothing more than a meteor travelling through the air, or the rising vapor from the foot of the mountains out of the low marshy ground, as is often the case. And as to the noise heard by Melker and those shepherd boys, it was only the echo of the shepherds on the other side of the mountain calling the nightwatch, or scaring away the wolves from their flocks.

But although this was nothing but a phenomenon of nature, and the whole thing a delusion, it did not better the condition I was in. A man will contend for a false faith stronger than he will for a true one from the fact that the truth defends itself, but a falsehood must be defended by its adherents: first, to prove it to themselves, and, secondly, that they may appear right in the estimation of their friends. But factually, the case is about as follows: The Roman taxation was cutting off the support of the priests, and they were smarting under it. Again, the double taxing that is, the tithes to the priests and the tax to the Romans was bearing heavily on the common people, so that they could not stand it. The priests saw that one of them would have to go unpaid, and as they saw the Romans were the stronger, they wrote these things in the Tosephta and read it daily in all their synagogues and temples, with the object that the Jewish mind would be prepared for the event, knowing that they would magnify a mote into a mountain. When it comes to anything outside of the common laws of nature, and knowing that if they could get the common people to believe in those things, there would be no end to their fighting. And from all appearances the excitement was fast driving the people that way. It had already become a gossip among the children of Bethlehem and Jerusalem that the Jews had a new king, that neither Cæsar nor Herod would reign anymore, and that they would have to pay no more taxes to keep up the Roman government. Such talk and sayings were common among the poorer classes of society.

So I saw an insurrection brewing fast and nothing but a most bloody war as the consequence. Now, under these circumstances, what was I to do? In my honest judgement it was best to pluck the undeveloped flower in its bud, lest it should grow and strengthen, and finally burst and shed its deadly poison over both nations, and impoverish and ruin them forever. My enemies can see I could have no malice toward the infants of Bethlehem. I took no delight in listening to the cries of innocent mothers. May all the gods forbid! No, I saw nothing but an insurrection and a bloody war to herald our doom, and in this the overthrow and downfall, to some extent, of our nation.

These are the grounds of my action in this matter. I am satisfied I did the best that could be done under the circumstances. As my motive was purely to do the best I could for my whole country, I hope you will so consider it, and I submit this statement for your consideration, promising faithfulness and submission to your judgement.

HEROD ANTIPATER.



## CHAPTER X - ARCHKOVOLUME

### HEROD ANTIPATER's DEFENCE BEFORE THE ROMAN SENATE IN REGARD TO THE EXECUTION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

WE found on the records of the Roman Senate, Herod Antipas' defence respecting the various accusations raised against him by different persons. In his defence there are some very important items regarding the Christian Church. The reader will notice that these events were recorded with no intention of establishing other facts. The defence consists of three parts: the history of John the Baptist; the history of Jesus Christ; the killing of the children by Herod's father in Bethlehem.

#### TO TIBERIUS CÆSAR AND THE SENATE OF ROME

*My Noble Lords, Greetings*

It is true, as my opponent asserts, that I was defeated in battle with Aretas, King of Arabia, but I was forced to fight when unprepared for the conflict. I either had to fight or have the country overrun by this wicked people. It is true, I was defeated, but it was owing to the want of time and better preparation. Aretas came upon me without warning. Notwithstanding the fact that I was defeated, it should be noted that his army was so crippled that he had to withdraw his forces from the field, and he has not been able to rally them ever since. So our country was saved from the devastation of a foreign foe. I know that the superstitious Jews say my defeat was for my wickedness in beheading John the Baptist. My understanding of the God of the Jews is that He does not chastise the innocent for the crimes of the guilty. What did my actions have to do with the poor, suffering soldier? But if He had to punish all in order to reach me, then where is his almighty power they boast so much of? I do not know whether their God was angry at me or not. There is one thing I know, the act was done with the holy intention of bringing the greatest amount of good to the greatest number of people, and if so, no court can gainsay it or condemn it.

#### THE FACTS IN THE CASE ARE ABOUT AS FOLLOWS:

John the Baptist had set up a new mode of religion altogether different from the Jewish religion, teaching baptism instead of circumcision, which had been the belief and custom of the Jews in all ages past. According to their theory, God appeared to Abraham hundreds of years before and told him with his own lips how and what to do to be saved. The Jews lived accordingly until it had become their very

nature. Indeed, all their forefathers lived that way. David, Solomon, Isaac, Jacob, and all the holy prophets went to heaven as regards the way appointed by God. Now, the question came to them, as they suggested it to me: Has God found that He was wrong? Has his wisdom failed Him? Or has the unchangeable changed and is He wavering in purpose? Such would be under the circumstances the logical conclusion of a sensible man. Now, John the Baptist received no authority from God for what he was doing, like Abraham had. All he could say was: "He, who sent me to baptize, is true." Yet, he could not tell who He was. Then there is the issue of God going into the wilderness, which defies logic, for God ordered Solomon to build the finest temple that was ever built in the world, and He made promises that whoever came to that house with offerings that his prayers would be heard and answered; this temple now has been their meeting place for hundreds of years. As to the Jews this is the next best thing to heaven. Now, see the differences: 1) John has no legitimize authority; 2) He changes God's place of worship; 3) He changes the doctrines; 4) He changes the mode of application.

Now, Gamaliel's idea was that John wanted to become some great man. Hence, he took this mode of eccentric life to establish it. And there is nothing better qualified than the course he took to make an impression upon the ignorant and unlearned to go away out into the wilderness by himself, get a few friends from Jerusalem to go out and hear him, and come back and tell of the great wonders which they had seen in the wilderness. Then there is John's appearance with his long, uncombed hair and beard, his fantastic clothing, and his food with nothing but bugs and beans. Such a course and such a character are well qualified to lead the illiterate astray. These troubles weighed very heavily on the Jewish mind, and gave such men as Hilderium [?], Shammai, Hillel, and others, great concern. And no wonder, for in their judgement it was vacating the Temple of religious worship, it was blocking the road to heaven and driving the poor and unsuspecting to ruin as well as destroying the whole nation. So it was, by their request, and was so ordered, that it was better to execute one to save the masses from a worse fate. This is the true reason for the deed. It was not done to please the whims of a dancing-girl, as you might have heard. Now, my lords, if this is not satisfactory, I would ask my accuser, Caius, to write to any of the learned Jews, and ascertain whether my statement is not correct.

As to Agrippa's accusing me of having arms for 70,000 soldiers, it is correct. But they were left by my father, Herod the Great. And as they were needed to defend the province, and I did not know it was necessary to report them, I never thought of keeping them secret. But as to my being in league with Sejonius, I appeal to the virtue of my conduct, and demand investigation.

As to what Pontius Pilate says in regard to my so-called cowardice and disobedience in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, I will say in my

own defence: I was informed by all the Jews that this was the same Jesus my father aimed to destroy in his infancy, for I have it in my father's private writings and accounts of his life. These show that when the report was circulated of three men inquiring where the newborn King of the Jews could be found, he called representatives of the Hillel and Shammai schools, and demanded the reading of the sacred scrolls. So it was decided he was to be born in Bethlehem of Judeah, as read and interpreted that night by Hillel. When my father learned that there was a birth of a male child in Bethlehem under very strange circumstances, and that in spite of that he could not learn who nor where the child was, he sent and had the male children slain that were near his age. Afterwards he heard that his mother had taken him and fled into the wilderness. For this attempt to uphold the Roman authority in the land of Judeah, the world has not ceased to curse him up to this day. And yet the Cæsars have done a thousand worse things and done them a thousand times, and it was all well. Just think how many lives have been lost to save the Roman Empire, while those infants were only removed in their innocence from the evil to come. The proper way to judge an action is to let the actor judge, or the one with whom the action terminates. If this is done, and there is a life of happiness beyond this for innocence to dwell in, those infants as well as the Rachels should be thankful to my father for the change.

Again, my lords, Pilate is a higher officer than I am. You know that in our law the lower court always has the right to appeal to the higher. As to Pilate's saying that Jesus was a Galilean, he is mistaken. Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judeah, as the records show. And as to his citizenship, he had none. He wandered about from place to place, having no home, making his abode principally with the poor. He was a wild radical, who had taken up the doctrines of John, but not his baptism, and was quite a fanatic. While in Egypt, he had learned soothsaying to perfection. I tried to get him to perform some miracle while in my court, but he was too sharp to be caught in a trap. Like all necromancers he was afraid to show off before the intelligent. From what I could learn, he had reprimanded some of the rich Jews for their meanness, and his reproaches were not out of the way. From what I heard they could have been much better men if they had practised what he preached.

*So this is my defence*

*I submit it for your consideration*

*Praying for clemency*

HEROD ANTIPAS.



**CHAPTER XI - ARCHKOVOLUME**

**THE SCHOOL OF HILLEL LETTERS**  
**REGARDING**  
**GOD'S PROVIDENCE TO THE JEWS**

The following seven letters were translated and  
sent to Mahan after his return home, so tells Mahan.

**I N D E X**

<b>THE FIRST LETTER</b>	page 180
<b>THE SECOND LETTER</b>	page 185
<b>THE THIRD LETTER</b>	page 191
<b>THE FOURTH LETTER</b>	page 199
<b>THE FIFTH LETTER</b>	page 203
<b>THE SIXTH LETTER</b>	page 207
<b>THE SEVENTH</b>	pages 210-228
<b><u>Called:</u></b>	
<b>THE EXPECTATION OF THE JEWS</b>	

## THE FIRST LETTER OF THE SCHOOL OF HILLEL

A. - TO the noble and persecuted sons of my Father, God, who is too wise to err in his judgement, and too mighty to let his Kingdom suffer or his children be persecuted beyond what is good for them: beholding our desolate condition, we must know there is always a good reason somewhere. From our former history, and the dealings of God with our forefathers, it is evident that it is not because He is neglectful of the interests of his children. It must be on our own account.

In directing your thoughts to these subjects, it is required to call your attention to the acts of God in the history of the world. By this we may learn the cause of our present condition. When He was dissatisfied with the wicked world, his eyes rested on one good man, Noah. Now, it is useless for us to begin a controversy as to how Noah became good. That is of no importance. The great question is: Are we good? And if not, why are we wicked? No doubt, this is the reason we are forsaken. If we could not help our being wicked, then we are persecuted wrongfully. But it was the goodness of Noah that preserved his life, and made him a great and happy man, while it was wickedness that caused all the rest of the world to be drowned. Then follow [the thread of history] along the line to Abraham. God found him faithful, and on this account He made him the father of all that are faithful and good. And so it went with hundreds of others that I could name in our former history. I would like to ask all the Jews in their dispersed condition to read the history of our race and see the dealings of God with the good, and his judgements upon the wicked.

Now, God selects certain individuals to relieve others. The chosen ones may not be good, but those for whom they are selected must be good [by seeking the right path], or they can receive no favor from God. Look at Moses. He was an infant. He could neither be good nor bad, because he was at that time powerless. But Israel was good, and it was by reason of Israel's goodness that Moses was selected. Hence from this babe in the basket we find the long chain of displays of God's mighty works in saving and defending and comforting the good, simply and alone because they were good. This is the only reason why God has ever bestowed special favors on anyone, just because He is good [and perfectly so], and I am sure this is all that is necessary to justify Him in his dealings with the sons of men. If He creates men and gives them all necessary power and opportunities to be good, and they refuse, then they are to blame, not He.

This is the reason He condemned the world to a flood. This is the reason the Egyptians were drowned. This is the reason the Sodomites were burned. This is the reason the Canaanites were destroyed. This is the reason we were sold into Babylon. And oh! – for a master spirit to rise up, as did Samuel to Saul, to tell us the reason we are again

forsaken and cast away. Why is it that our city and the Holy Temple are forsaken and desolate ? Why is it that God fights no more battles for Israel? Why is it that we have no leader that would be safe for the people to follow? Why is it that Israel is turned against herself, that every evil bird is permitted to pluck her, and that her best friends turned out to be her enemies? Why is it that Josephus sold Galilee to the Romans? Why is it that the sanctifying of the Spirit is withdrawn? Why is it that the Urim and the Thummim in the Temple have not changed the color of their stones for thirty years? Why is it that the light at the threshold of the Temple has ceased to burn? And why is it that the Jews have lost the feeling of brotherhood and fight each other like the beasts of Hell, to such an extent that God has given us over and permitted the Romans to devour our heritage, to burn our city, to destroy our beloved Temple and drench it with the blood of its devotees?

Note 1: Josephus initially fought against the Romans during the First Jewish-Roman War as head of Jewish forces in Galilee, until surrendering in 67 AD. Josephus told the Roman commander Flavius Vespasian that the Jewish messianic prophecies made reference to him becoming Roman Emperor. After Vespasian became Emperor in 69 AD, he granted Josephus his freedom, at which time Josephus assumed the emperor's family name of Flavius.

Note 2: Following a brutal seven-month siege, during which Zealot infighting resulted in the burning of the entire food supplies of Jerusalem, the Romans succeeded in breaching the defenses in the summer of 70 AD. The Temple of Jerusalem was then destroyed.

I know that many of my brethren, more particularly the priests, will bring heavy charges against the ministration and, of course, indirectly impeach God. But it may be, my brethren, we misunderstand God's designs in all those kind of things. And may we not be equally mistaken in regard to our desert or our demerit in his dealing with us? We know that the guilty party is apt to think the law is too severe, but we never think so when others are to suffer, and especially if we are the party against whom the criminal has offended and done wrong.

When a Jewish person becomes mean and wicked and violates the Jewish law and injures us personally, then we propose to stone him to death, if his actions have been such to deserve such a sentence. Conversely, we carry the same guilt if we in any way try to screen the criminal from suffering the just penalty of law. Now let us, as honest Jews, look in our own natures and examine our actions in the light of God's holy revelation, and see if our present condition is or is not meritorious on our part. If we find that it is us who have forsaken God, instead of his having forsaken us, then let us do as our fathers in Egypt, do as our fathers in Babylon. They hung their harps, putting on sackcloth and ashes they mourned as do the dove and the pelican. So did they seek rest until the Lord, God Yahweh, was moved with compassion. They not only ceased to act wickedly, but they

showed by their regrets and confession that they would act differently in future. And so God had compassion on them, and moved the heart of their wicked king to pity them, that they might return and rebuild their Temple. These were the ways in which they conducted themselves, and look at the results that followed. Now, these things were for their own good, but were recorded that we might learn what to do in case we have been brought into the same condition.



**B.** - NOW, I wish my Jewish brethren to understand that I am not a follower of this Nazarene, who created so much strife among the people, neither do I indorse his new doctrines. Yet I think it would be well for us not to be too hasty in forming conclusions on this or any other subject. I heard Peter preach the other day, and as he and John came out of the Temple there was a man that had been lying around at the gates and public crossings for years. He was unable to walk, having no soundness in his feet and anklebones. As they were passing him, he asked them for help. Peter said he had nothing to give. But, said he: "In the name of Jesus the Son of God, I say unto thee, rise up and walk." And the man sprang to his feet, seemingly perfectly sound, and commenced praising God at the top of his voice, which caused a great commotion among the people. The police came and took Peter and John to prison as peacebreakers. I think, I never saw such a commotion. It is right to arrest men for doing evil, but to arrest and imprison for doing good is something I cannot comprehend. This has been the fault of us Jews at all times. No odds what good was done, if it was not done just as the priest thought it ought to be done, it was wrong.

When I saw the act of Peter toward the helpless man, I said to myself: 'There is the power of Moses, there is the power of Yahweh manifest in human flesh, there is the power needed by us Jews to reinstate the Kingdom of Heaven, there is the power that followed the Jews in times past and it is the only distinguishing mark that differentiates us from the other nations of the earth.' This was the peculiar power of Jesus of Nazareth. Because he did not work according to Jewish rule, they condemned him to die. It was not because his works were not good, but because he did not do them according to the Jewish custom.

I was forcibly struck with Peter's sermon. He said: "There was a rich man who had one son. This son had been trying for a long time to build him a house. He was homeless and exposed to many dangers and trouble for the want of a house, until he was almost exhausted and was ready to perish. And his father had compassion on his son and built him a house, provided with everything for the necessities and comforts of his child. When it was finished he went and brought his son to see it. And his son was delighted and said it was much better than he could have built himself. And his father said: 'Son, I

love you. I give you this house. Will you accept it?' 'With all my heart, dear father, with grateful acknowledgments.' Now, Peter said: "Here is the picture of the world which has been working, struggling, and striving for ages to build a home for the soul of Man. They have worked by the laws of men, by building fine temples, by offering sacrifices, by paying tithes to the Lord, by walking hundreds of miles to the Temple, barefooted and bareheaded, by keeping holy days and festivals, and all to no purpose. The soul has become wearied out of patience, and has still no rest, until man has become dissatisfied not only with himself, but with his God and his service. And while in this despairing condition, God our Father comes in the person of Jesus, whom the Jews crucified. And it is by his death that He prepared us a house of rest. He now proposes to his children to accept what he has done for them, and stop working and worrying to try to fit themselves for a higher station and a happier life." And Peter asked: "Who will accept?"

Again Peter said: "This house was beautiful to look at, and was in every way suited to the son, yet he could not enjoy it from the fact that it had no furniture. So the son went to work and toiled and labored trying to make furniture to suit himself. But notwithstanding he could not get a piece that would last. It soon became useless because it did not suit him. Then the father went to work and made all manner of ware, and presented it to his son. Every piece fitted the place and suited the purpose for which it was made, so that the son was well pleased. And the father said: 'All this will I give you, my son, because I love you. Would you accept?' The son said: 'With all my heart, dear father. This pleases me better than if I had had the power to make it myself.'" "Now", said Peter: "This is what God has done for the world. Instead of purifying ourselves by washing, by fasting, by prayers, by penitence, and by all the works of the law, God has given us a purity that will last forever, that will suit us and will please Him."

Again said Peter: "This son was all ragged. His clothes were worn threadbare in trying to build and fit him a house, and he was ashamed. So he went to work to try to clothe himself, and the harder he worked the less success he was rewarded with. After he had worked hard, his father went to work and wove him a seamless robe, and presented it to his son, and said: 'My son, I love you, and I have prepared a white robe. Would you accept it?' 'With many thanks, dear father', said the son. 'Oh, how beautiful it is! How snowy white! How well it fits me! Oh! father, I never can feel grateful enough. I thought you were angry and hated me, because I was poor and homeless and miserable and ragged, but if thou did love me in my misery, I know thou can love me now, and will delight to make your abode with me forevermore. Oh! father, I don't know how to show my gratitude to you.' The son was delighted with the change, while the father was equally delighted with the son, and they both rejoiced."

“And the father said to the son: ‘I delight to dwell with my children when they live in a manner that is suited to my taste, and, of course, this suits me from the fact it is all my own work. Only be content, and do not soil your robe, for it is so white and clean, a very little stain with dirt and filth will so contaminate it, it will not be fit to be shown. As long as you keep it unstained from the world it will distinguish you from the world and make you a welcome visitor into the company of all that are dressed in the same robe, for this is merely the outward showing of the principles that live within, which principles are only developed by the outward appearance. It will even be admired by those who reject it, because in their inner being they must respect it. Though they may covet it and raise the spirit of persecution against you, it is not because they dislike you, but because they are not like you. And indeed, this is the cause of envy everywhere.’”

“This”, said Peter, “is the way God our Father has treated us spiritually. He has prepared us a holy habitation, where our immortal souls can live and be happy through all eternity, and then has given us the Holy Spirit, the same Jesus promised and the same that fell on the people the other day. This Spirit renews and begets within us holy desires to love God and to serve Him by obeying all his commandments and giving honor to his Name. This same Spirit begets within us a holy desire to see all men embrace the offering of this good and noble Father, that they may be happy now and happy forever, more so after death than before, for it is the dread of meeting an interminable doom for our sins that makes our lives intolerable.” “Oh!”, said Peter, “behold the riches offered on terms so easy by our Father. All we need to do is to accept them. Who will accept?” And there were two or three hundred who cried out: “We will!” And then followed a mighty rising up and rejoicing, all of which made a very strong impression on my mind.

I am going to make a most thorough examination into these things, to see if they are so and evaluate whether God has provided an easier and a better way to save the souls of men than the Jewish arrangement. I feel that the subject is worth looking into, for of long it has seemed to me – and my father saw and spoke of the same – that the ways of serving God were exacting and apt to make men become indifferent. These almost drove men to look on God as a haughty tyrant, while Peter’s illustration shows Him in such a lovely light that it makes me love Him.



## THE SECOND LETTER OF THE SCHOOL OF HILLEL

AFTER having viewed our present condition, it may be well for us to look back and review our former history and get some knowledge of the state of the world in former times. If we look at the world from the pages of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Haggai, the last of God's prophets upon earth, we will see a period of nearly 500 years to the present, during which time the world underwent greater changes than ever before. We will see our nation returning from a 70 years' captivity, recommencing their national existence after having been overrun and absorbed in the first great monarchy that swept over the earth. Our acquaintance with the rest of the world was very limited, extending only to the Chaldeans, the Phoenicians, the Egyptians, and a few unimportant tribes. Our ideas seem to have been likewise limited, extending but little beyond the principles of the Mosaic religion, which had been promulgated about 1500 years earlier. "I am informed that the accusation against Jesus was written over him as he hung upon the cross, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Whence came these dialects? When the prophets closed their writings – which was nearly 500 years ago – the Greek was scarcely a written language, it being confined to a small part of Europe. And Rome, from which the Latin language came, was then a straggling village on the banks of the Tiber. During this whole period, in which nations and monarchies were born, flourished, and decayed – showing clearly a providential preparation, the intermingling of the various languages indicates the preparation for some great event, and to my mind makes the juncture most opportune for the introduction of a universal religion. That is, if I understand it right, God has arranged the position and the existence of the several nations of the earth in such a manner as to promote the recognition, the establishment, and the propagation of the true religion, the knowledge and worship of the true God.

Whatever knowledge may have been imparted to our ancestors, or however long it may have lasted, certain it is that at the time of Abraham the nations generally had fallen into idolatry. To him God was pleased to make himself known, and to promise that of him He would make a great nation, and that in him and his seed all the nations of the earth were going to be blessed. That is, through him and his posterity he would impart the greatest possible good, the knowledge of the true God. To accomplish this purpose, God selected the spot in which he and his posterity were to be placed. No spot on earth could have been better suited for the purpose. The land of Canaan, afterward called Judeah and still later Palestine, is a tract of land situated about midway between the three great divisions of the earth: Asia, Africa, and Europe. It is on the great highway of nations, in the very path of conquest, commerce, and travel, and was equally accessible to all parts of the then known world.

But those circumstances, which afterward made Judeah so favorably located as the radiating point of the true faith, did not exist in Abraham's time. There was neither conquest nor commerce nor travel. The world was overrun by wandering tribes, scarcely having boundaries or fixed habitations. Chaldea, the cradle of the human race, and Egypt, the birthplace of human learning and the arts, were the only nations of consequence then. It is not probable that any such thing as alphabetic writing existed, for we read that Abraham took no other evidence of the purchase which he made of a burying place for his family than living witnesses of the bargain. At that time, therefore, divine communication must have been confined to individuals. The fulness of time had not yet come, even not for that partial revelation that was made by Moses. In Abraham's time there was no mode by which it could be recorded and preserved. The invention of writing was required to prepare the world for it, an invention that took place some time within the 500 years that elapsed between Abraham and Moses. Into Egypt, the mother of the arts, the posterity of Abraham was sent as if to a school, not in divine things – for in that knowledge the shepherds of Canaan exceeded the refined Egyptians as far as light exceeds darkness – but in the knowledge of those things by which life is rendered comfortable.

When they had sufficiently grown in numbers to take possession of the destined territory, a leader was raised up amongst them for that special purpose. It was to be Moses, the child of a slave, his life exposed in infancy in a frail cradle of rushes upon the waters. Yet, he was destined to be the mightiest agent in the affairs of men that the Almighty had ever employed on earth. Who can but admire the wisdom of divine providence in the education of this great founder of nations, this prophet of divine truth, this enlightener of the world? Who can fathom the glorious position which he holds in the world's history? What a distinction to have framed the constitution of a nation that lasted 1500 years, and stamped a people with the marks of nationality which time itself has not obliterated! To have written a book that was to be read with interest and ardor during the train of ages and growing millions of the human race! To impart to nations and continents the saving knowledge of the one true God! What a glory to have laid in myriad of minds in but one sentence the foundation of true religion: "In the beginning God created heavens and earth." The more I contemplate the mission of Moses, the higher he rises in moral sublimity in my estimation. If I look at him during the 40 years wanderings in the wilderness, he is the only depository of the true religion on earth, with the exception of the tribe he led, as the whole world was sunk in the debasement of idolatry. What a noble use did the Almighty make of the recent invention of man's ingenuity, the invention of letters, to engrave upon stone his awful testimony against the great, fundamental and all-polluting sin of the world, the worship of idols: "Thou shalt have no other Gods before Me; thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness



of anything that is in the heaven above or in the earth beneath; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them.”

To realize and carry out this one thing was the purpose of separating the Jews from the rest of the world. With all the seals and signs and God’s special judgements it took 1400 years to do so. Why did it take so long? Because we are so prone to worship the things that are seen, instead of the unseen, and this remains one of the great troubles at the present day. This is one of the reasons for our desolation. We thought too much of our Holy City and Temple. But if this was our sin, what might we expect from the people in the state of ignorance in the days of Moses? Oh, brethren, let us ask ourselves, are we not more inclined to worship the created things than we are to worship Him who created them? Look at the people I am speaking of. Forty days had not elapsed from the utterance from Sinai of this fundamental precept: “Thou shalt have no other Gods before Me”, when the very people to whom this command had been given, made for themselves a golden calf after the manner of those idolatrous Egyptians, and they danced before it with great joy.

To secure this one grand and fundamental point – that is, the worship of the only living and true God – the whole Mosaic arrangement was modelled. For this purpose we were forbidden to marry foreigners, for this purpose our sacrifices were all to be offered in one place and by one family of priests, lest we should wander away and become corrupt by association with idolaters. For this purpose we were forbidden certain kinds of food, such as are offered in sacrifices to heathen deities. We were not to be present at idolatrous feasts, nor to become accustomed to those moral abominations with which heathen worship is invariably accompanied. More effectually, to secure this point, divine providence so arranged it that our national existence and prosperity depended on our fidelity to the great project for which we were set apart. Whenever we worshipped the true God and obeyed his laws, temporal wellbeing was the natural consequence, from which union, peace, industry and prosperity ensued. But whenever we forsook God and worshipped idols, a corresponding degeneracy of morals and manners took place. This was followed by discord, weakness, poverty, and subjection to foreign nations.

But the event that exerted the most decisive influence upon the national existence of us Jews was the erection of Solomon’s Temple at Jerusalem. Before that time our sacred rites had been conducted in a very humble manner. Our sacred utensils had no better covering than a tent. Often they were in private custody. Once the sacred Ark itself, which contained the heaven-derived charter of our national existence, was taken captive and remained for months in the country of the Philistines. The Ark was for nearly 400 years almost the only bond of our national union, the only object around which gathered our national reverence, and, although in our younger years we were apt to regard that Ark and its contents with a childish curiosity, in

later years we came to look upon it as an object of higher significance. It represented the written testimony of God against idolatry. It contains the fundamental articles of our nation's constitution, the charter from God for a nation's establishment and independence. It is a declaration of principles, which was borne before us like a banner, proclaiming to the world for what we were to live, for what we were to fight, for what we were to die. It was our confession of faith, which we upheld before the world as sacred, true, and vital to the best interest of humanity, and the only hope of our final success. Once this is abandoned we are lost, disgraced, fallen forever. On the tables in that Ark it was written: "Thou shalt have no other Gods before Me", and also: "Thou shalt not make any graven image, nor the likeness of anything; thou shalt not bow down to anything to serve them." There it remained from age to age as the memorial of the purpose of our national existence. And how mightily has it worked in the earth!

There is an incident related by the sacred historian which appears symbolical of the purpose of the whole time frame, which that sacred episode deals with. It is written in 1 Samuel 5: "And the Philistines took the Ark and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. When the Philistines took the Ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose early in the morning, behold, Dagon had fallen upon his face to the earth before the Ark of the Lord. They took Dagon and set him in his place again, and when they rose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen to his face to the ground again before the Ark of the Lord, and the head of Dagon and the palms of his hands were broken off and found upon the threshold, only Dagon's torso was left of it."

So all idolatry is destined to fall before the Word of the Almighty. So has our Dagon fallen — and oh! what a dreadful fall it is to us Israelites. Let me tell you, what happened in the Temple of Ashdod has gradually been accomplished throughout the Land of Israel (Eretz Yisrael). Many times has Dagon been set up in his place again! Many times has idolatry been revived! The Ark of God has been in the hands of the enemy — it is there now at this time. And just when the true religion was about to be extinguished, the Almighty interposed in order to vindicate his honor and reestablish the worship to Him. At last He obtained a triumph and that by the very means which at first threatened to overthrow it forever.

I have said that the purpose of our national existence was greatly promoted by the building of the Temple at Jerusalem. It was a splendid edifice, calculated to awaken the curiosity, to attract the attention and command the respect of the world. It furnished a place of appropriate convenience, beauty and dignity for the celebration of our daily sacrifices and national rites. It made our three yearly festivals more interesting, when all the males were obliged to present themselves before God. It gave us what we all need at this time: a fixture to our

religion, a local habitation for our religious applications and associations. It connected the sentiment of religion with another no less important one, that of patriotism, and enlisted them both for the preservation and defence of the Mosaic institutions of our nation. It also led to the formation of a national literature that gives expression to these two most powerful sentiments of the human heart, and it thus operated to call them forth and strengthen them by each succeeding generation.

Still, the Mosaic institutions, assisted by the magnificence of the temple service, failed to extirpate entirely the propensity to idolatry. Occasionally it sprang up and overspread the country till at last the Almighty saw fit to suffer that the Temple be overthrown, his people to be carried into captivity, and the worship to Him suspended for seventy years. And so his judgements accomplished what his mercies could not do. The very measure of divine severity, which at first sight threatened to sweep the worship of the true God from the face of the earth and give up the world to the interminable dominion of idolatry, was the means of establishing it on a firmer basis than ever before. Although Jerusalem was overthrown and its Temple razed to its foundation, the Jews carried the true Jerusalem in their hearts. And so it is today. Although our holy city is no more, and although we are dispersed and many of us have been sold into slavery, yet the Holy Temple of our God lives and will continue to live in our hearts forever. Wherever we go, whether to the splendid cities of the East, or amid the fascinations of Egypt, or to the tents of the wandering shepherds, still our affections are set on the Holy Land, and, like Daniel, when praying we'll turn our faces toward the land where our fathers used to worship the God of Heaven.

Nehemiah, when serving in the courts of princes, lamented when he heard that the walls of Jerusalem were thrown down. There in slavery, our fathers had time to reflect upon the cause of their calamities. There they read in the Book of Moses, which was the companion in their exile, the awful curses He had threatened them with if they would forsake the worship of the true God. And they felt them to be fulfilled in themselves. There they read the prophecy, which was written by Moses more than a thousand years earlier in Deuteronomy 28:58-67: "If you will not observe all the words of the law written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord your God, then the Lord will scatter you to every nation on earth, and among these nations you will find no ease, neither shall the sole of your foot have rest. But the Lord will give you then a trembling heart and failing eyes, and sorrow of mind, and your life shall hang in doubt before you, and you shall fear night and day, and live in constant fear of death. In the morning you will say: 'I wish it were night!' But at night you will be terrified and say: 'I wish it were day!' With heartburn you will fear when you behold the sight of your eyes." Thus were our fathers smitten to the heart by the fulfilment of such awful threatenings. All propensity to idolatry was forever cured.

Never after this period could the allurements of pleasure or the threats of pain, neither dens of wild beasts nor the fiery furnace, neither instant death nor lingering torture, ever induce them to offer sacrifice to idols. This same providence that had scattered them to foreign lands, now restored them to their own. Their Temple was rebuilt, the daily sacrifice was resumed and never stopped, with the exception of about three years under Antiochus Epiphanes.

But now let us look at our present condition, and see how we, their children, have fallen. The Ark has once more been taken from us, Jerusalem is in ruins, trodden by the feet of the Gentiles, ruin has driven her ploughshare through the crumbling walls, and we are scattered to mix and mingle among all nations.

Note: It says: “the Ark has once more been taken from us”, as if it was present in the so-called second Temple. However, the Ark of the Covenant did not find its place in the second Temple that was built after the Babylonian Exile, because the Ark was already lost then. Just before the Babylonian Exile it had been hidden and it has never been found again. The writer probably assumed that it was taken away by the Romans during the first Jewish War, when in the summer of the year 70 AD they destroyed the second Temple. If this second letter was written around the year 140 AD, just after the annihilation of the country by the Romans, who revenged the Bar Kochba revolt, the Jewish commonwealth was in total disarray. It is understandable, in these circumstances, that some historical details were missed by this writer. His mistake is understandable too because the Bar Kochba Revolt shekel-coin, issued by the Jews during the revolt, show the Holy of Holies of the Temple, with in it the Ark of the Covenant.



## THE THIRD LETTER OF THE SCHOOL OF HILLEL

As all the nations of the earth lacked the knowledge of the true God except us Jews, it devolved on us as a nation to extend this knowledge to all the world, which was brought about by the following plan: First, by the universal diffusion of the Greek language, and, secondly, by the conquest of the world by the Romans. Another cause, almost as essential, was the scattering of our nation among all nations of the earth, for narrowness and bigotry had almost made us a barren tree as to any general good for the world. So ancient were our habits and fixed our customs that spiritual life was almost extinct. Therefore, it was necessary for us even to learn a new language, that the knowledge of the true God might be infused into a new medium and thus be spread from land to land. It was necessary that the true medicine of life should be dissolved in an element which flowed on every shore and in every stream so that all men might taste thereof and be saved. It was necessary, too, that a foreign tongue should be forced upon us, for nothing but conquest and constraint, nothing but this, could overcome our bitter prejudices. It will be the object of this letter to show how this was brought about.

The great designs of God were advanced by our misfortunes as well as by our prosperity. In God's purpose of preparing the world for the advent of a higher life and greater attainment in godliness, each event had a ripening tendency. Whether we worshipped in Jerusalem in peace or wept by the rivers of Babylon, everywhere and under all circumstances we taught a knowledge of the true God. Everywhere our nation has cherished the hope of triumph in the expectation of a coming Messiah. The first great empire to which Judeah fell prey was the Babylonian. [Actually, the Assyrian happened to be the first one, and the Babylonian the second one.] Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar 557 years ago, and the remnant of the people was carried to Babylon and the neighboring countries, where the main body had been removed to 18 years earlier. [It was during Nebuchadnezzar's 18<sup>th</sup> year, but the main body was removed in Nebuchadnezzar's 7<sup>th</sup> year.] The glimpses of those times and countries are very short, but enough is given us to see that the residence of our fathers in those countries was not without effect.

It is impossible to put out the light of a Jew's eye, or to extinguish the fire that burns in his heart. The life of our fathers made lasting effects on the people they were with as well as on themselves. One person in particular adorned that dark period of God's exiled community. The prophet Daniel gives us almost the only sight we get of mighty Babylon. His writings furnish us with a number of great truths. He passes before us from youthful beauty to extreme age. We see him rising, like Joseph. By early wisdom, piety, and integrity he climbs up from a state of slavery to become the chief as Minister of

State, and it is altogether probable that it was through him that Cyrus was prompted to restore our people to our holy land again. The edict was issued in the first year of his reign, immediately after the capture of Babylon, which Daniel had foretold by interpreting the writing on the wall.

But the restoration of our nation, an event so wonderful and strange in the history of the world, though properly attributed to God's providence, was brought about by means more circuitous than is generally thought. It was not for nothing that during 70 years fifty to hundred thousand Jews lived in Babylonia, Media, and Persia. This did not happen without making a singularly religious impression [on the people among whom they lived]. Our people appear to have been treated with much more respect among these oriental nations than in the western world. The reason of this, probably, was that the Persians like the Arabians, their neighbors, had not forsaken the patriarchal religion or sunk into such gross and degrading idolatry as those nations which had wandered farthest from the paternal hearthstone of the human race.

It is in this period of our nation's sojourn in the East that the famous reformer, Zoroaster, appeared. I look upon him as the second Moses, though without inspiration. Availing himself of the light of the true revelation, he attempted not to introduce a new religion, but to refine, purify, and build up the religion of his country by introducing into it the most important principles of the true faith, and thus, with a mixture of base and noble motives, to benefit his country, and reflect glory on himself. The secret of his success was that he taught the theology of Moses. His theology was so simple and sublime and so consonant at the same time with the best conceptions of mankind that it clothed this impostor with the veneration of his countrymen, and sanctified even his crimes and follies. It was from Moses that Zoroaster derived the idea of one living God, the maker of heaven and earth, but he corrupted this pure doctrine by making two subordinate gods, the authors respectively of good and evil.

From Moses he received an utter abhorrence of all images and of the temples in which they were worshipped, but he introduced, in connection with the true faith, the doctrine of evil spirits dividing the government of the universe. So it happened that there was not only an influence of the religion of our fathers upon that of the Persians, but a reaction of the Persian religion upon that of our nation. The Jews, as would appear from the book of Tobit, first learned in their captivity those ideas that pertained to the agency of evil spirits in our world, of which we find traces in all their histories. Cyrus was a Persian, and in all probability had been instructed in the doctrines of Zoroaster, a combination, as we have seen, of Judaism and the ancient Persian religion. Hence, his extraordinary partiality for the Jews is explained, and his zeal in rebuilding the only temple on earth which in his name was dedicated to the God of Heaven, a temple that

was to be free from the all-pervading and polluting sin of idol-worship.

But the influence of Zoroaster did not end here. The successors of Cyrus were educated in his religion. The priests and teachers of his religion were called magi and they exerted a powerful influence in the affairs of the state. Darius Hystaspes, son-in-law and successor of Cyrus, warmly espoused the religion of the Persian philosopher, and when Zoroaster was slain by an uprising of the Scythians, he amply avenged his death, and rebuilt the fine temples that those Scythians had destroyed, in particular – and with more splendor than before – the one in which Zoroaster had ministered.

Note: Vishtaspa, also known under his Hellenized name Hystaspes (Υστάσπης), was the father of Darius I, King of the Achæmenid Empire, and Artabanus, a trusted adviser to both his brother (Darius) and later his nephew (Darius's son and successor was Xerxes I). Source: Wikipedia.

It was this enmity to idolatry, thus derived through Zoroaster from Moses, which was the only redeeming principle that the Persian monarchs showed in all their extensive conquests. Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, madman and tyrant as he was, derives a sort of dignity from his zeal against idolatry. His indignation at seeing the Egyptians worship a living brute, at least does honor his Persian education, though in other respects he was a cruel and detestable tyrant. When Darius and Xerxes marched their mighty armies into Europe, the only idea which these vast expeditions were intended to carry out, that can excite a little sympathy in the mind of a Jew, was the destruction of idolatry, which they everywhere threatened to do and attempted to realize. Thus it is that the mind governs at last. The Persian kings, with their vast armies, bearing war and subjugation to remotest lands, were only realizing ideas which had been matured by Zoroaster in his cave, and which he in turn had derived from Moses.

Thus through our exiled fathers the hand became the executive of the brain to establish the worship of the true God, and in the revolution of the wheels of nature, as seen by Ezekiel, the soldier is the machine of the thinker, and armies are assembled and battles fought to carry out a few ideas with which men of letters have filled the mind of a nation. The scholars and sages, prophets and impostors, good men and bad men, kings and generals, armies and revolutions, are all equally used to accomplish the purposes of that eternal Mind, who sitteth supreme over all, whom we, as the only nation known on earth, recognize as the 'divine providence'. The ambition of Cyrus and his successors, though in a manner which they did not anticipate, was the means made use of by our Eternal Father of introducing among the enslaved and ignorant multitude of the East, the civilization, the arts, and the learning, which Greece, with her wonderful genius, had matured.

Cyrus, whose sudden intrusion into Babylon terminated Belshazzar's feast and fulfilled so terribly the writing on the wall, had already extended the Persian Empire over the greater part of Asia Minor. Belshazzar, the last king over Babylon, attempted to strengthen himself against the growing power of the Persians by forming an alliance with Cræsus, King of Lydia, so famous for his riches. This monarch, made arrogant by his great wealth and the command of an army of nearly half a million, resolved to encounter the Persian power that but lately had become formidable. To doubly bolster his confidence he sent to inquire of the Oracle at Delphi in Greece, and received for answer: "If Cræsus pass the Holys, the boundary between Lydia and Persia, he shall destroy a great empire." He went and found that empire being destroyed was his own. He was defeated by Cyrus, and his whole Kingdom came into the hands of the conqueror 540 years ago.

This conquest brought the Persians in collision with the Greeks and was the cause of those wars which were waged with such bitterness for generations between the two nations. This finally resulted in the destruction of the Persian monarchy. The Greeks, though natives of Europe, had planted many colonies on the Asiatic coast. These colonies, though infinitely superior to the effeminate and luxurious Asiatics in every physical, intellectual, and moral attribute, were altogether unable to resist the overwhelming weight of an empire which reached from Ethiopia to the Caspian Sea, and from the Indus to the Bosphorus. They were obliged to submit, like the rest, and pay an annual tribute to their conquerors, no less to the humiliation and annoyance of the mother-country than themselves. The yoke at length became so oppressive that they resolved to throw it off. To effect this they applied to Athens and Sparta for aid. Receiving assistance from these most considerable states of Greece, they rebelled, marched to Sardis, took it, and accidentally set the city on fire, by which it was totally consumed. The loss of this city, the richest in Asia Minor, exasperated Darius, King of Persia, to the highest degree, and kindled in his breast such a flame of resentment that he resolved upon revenge. Lest in his multifarious affairs he should forget the offenders, he appointed officers whose duty it was each day to repeat to him as he dined: "Sir, remember the Athenians."

Resolved to punish these presumptuous republics which had dared to brave the whole power of the Persian Empire, he collected a fleet and army sufficient, as he supposed, to crush so small a country at one blow. After an ineffectual attempt to reach Greece by the circuitous route of Thrace and Macedonia, a second armament was fitted out, of the flower of that army which had borne conquest on their banners from the Euphrates to the Nile, and it was transported by sea directly toward the little republic of Athens, able then to send into the field but from ten to fifteen thousand men. The Athenians met and vanquished the Persian army on the plain of Marathon, leaving 6,000 dead on the field. Thus ended the first attempt of Persian despotism upon the liberties of Greece. This may be said to be the first demon-



stration that was ever given to the world of the benefits of a free (life under) government. A few ages of absolute political liberty had trained up a race of men such as had never been seen before. Intelligence combined with physical force, thorough discipline, and an enthusiastic love of country, for the first time were brought to contend hand to hand with the pampered sons of Eastern luxury and the spiritless automata of a despotic government. The result was what it will ever be. The Orientals fell like grass before the swords of the free. But this defeat, so far from discouraging the conqueror of the Indies, only roused him to mightier efforts. He immediately resolved on invading Greece with a larger army than before, but in the midst of his preparations he fell before a mightier conqueror, and left the inheritance of his Kingdom and his revenge to his son Xerxes, who was destined still further to add to the glory of Greece, though it would seem that this son could have understood that in the providence of God a man with men combined could not contend with the Almighty.

Note: The battle of Marathon took place in ca. 420 BC (Wikipedia says 490, which is adjusted according to Panin's 'Cyrus yr 1' at 488), signalling the Persians' first-time loss. Herodotus says that until that day, on which the world witnessed the doom of their invincibility, "the name of Medes was a terror to hear".

But this youth, succeeding to the mightiest monarchy, which the world had ever known, was resolved to signalize his reign by extending still further the boundaries of his hereditary dominions. Asia was not enough to satisfy his boundless ambition. Europe likewise had to be subjected to his power. His father's quarrel with the Greeks furnished him with a convenient apology for such enormous injustice. He spent four years in preparation for this great event. Xerxes then ruled over the most fruitful portion of the globe. The simple habits of life which then prevailed enabled the earth to sustain some three or four times the number that can be supported in the more costly and luxurious mode which has since been adopted by all civilized nations. He called upon every nation to furnish its quota of troops or ships or provisions, from Ethiopia to the Caspian, from the Ægean to the Persian Gulf. Four full years were consumed in making preparation. And all for what? To crush a small nation.

We naturally turn our eyes to Greece, the devoted object of all this expense. There she lies, with her beautiful islands laved by the crystal waters of the Ægean Sea. There is Athens, with her exquisite arts, her literature and her science, with her constellations of genius just ready to burst upon the world. There was Sparta, less cultivated, but the bulwark of Grecian independence. There was Leonidas with his three hundred. There, in a little peninsula, lays the intellectual hope of the world, the sole germ of free government forever and ever. Is this brave and gallant people to be crushed at a blow? Would finally, the Persian banners float on the hills of a subjugated Greece? Is it to be announced at Susa that order reigns in Attica? Is Asiatic despotism

to overwhelm in one long night of oppression the very dawn of human greatness?

Note: Leonidas sacrificed his life defending the pass of Thermopylæ from the Persians. He marched out of Sparta to meet Xerxes' army with a small force of 1200 men among whom 300 hoplites. Hoplites were the fighting men of the Greek city-states that existed long before the idea of a unified Greek country. We are talking about the Athenians, Spartans, Macedonians and the like. While the Spartan professional soldiers were renowned for their military prowess, most hoplites were farmers and artisans who only underwent basic military training. Therefore they needed tactics that were simple, yet effective. So the famous phalanx formation was born: a shield wall bristling with pointy bits.

In that contest, literature had her stake. The very existence of those men depended on the issue of this vast enterprise, whose works – that whole galaxy of genius whose clustering radiance has since encircled the earth – have been the study and delight of all succeeding times. The religion of our fathers had much at stake. Standing now and gazing back upon this epoch of history we are made to tremble, for all these were nations given to idolatry. Everywhere are ceremonies, temples, priests, but both priests and people, the noble and the base, the learned and the simple, all alike grope in Cimmerian darkness as to the knowledge of the true God. There is but one exception to this in all the earth: the Temple at Jerusalem.

We turn our eyes eastward to our land [Haaretz, a term that the Jews also used in the Greek language], and there we see the Temple of the true God, just rising from the ruins of 70 years of desolation [the Babylonian exile]. Its builders, a feeble company, had just returned from a long captivity [in the beginning of 5<sup>th</sup> century before Christ]. The very language in which their holy oracles were written, had [at the time] become obsolete. Their speech was Chaldean, and their religious teachers were obliged from Shabbat to Shabbat to interpret from a dead language the records of their faith. This may pertain for a small territory and for a feeble few, as existed at that time, ...but the world needs light. And how otherwise shall the wisdom of God and the wisdom of Man unite and carry God's wisdom round the world so that all might get to know the living and true God? If Xerxes prevails, this can never be. Forbid it, then, freedom! Forbid it, then, religion! Forbid it, intellect! Arise, O God, and let thine enemies be scattered, and those that rise up against the liberties of thy people be driven away like the chaff which the wind driveth away. So, Xerxes did not prevail. The soil of our land [Haaretz] would not bear the tread of a foe to the religion of the true God. The Jewish nature, breathing the invigorated air of freedom, disciplined by science and animated by enlightened patriotism, grows up to a strength, a firmness and courage which hosts of [warrior] slaves can never subdue, by which the tenfold cord of oppression is rent asunder like the bands that bound the limbs of Samson. This army, though it was raised by Xerxes, is under the command of the God of Heaven. It cannot, it

must not, it shall not conquer! It is to teach the Greeks that they are masters of the world. It invites them to roll back the tide of conquest from Asia, and carry Grecian manners, arts, science, and language into the East. They shall penetrate our holy land (after the return from exile). Into their language our holy oracles shall be translated. In their language shall be recorded the words of eternal life. Laden with that priceless treasure that language shall come to our land (Haaretz), bearing light and truth and salvation to the nations and generations, yet unborn.

Note: The Greek word for 'Hebrew' in the New Testament is consistently interpreted in the translations as meaning 'Aramaic', as if it is an ethnical form (Flemisch for instance is an ethnic indication and not linguistic, because Flemish equals Dutch). Aramaic was then called Syrian (or Suristi) or alternatively Chaldean (Chaldaisti). Hebrew was then called Hebrew (Hebraikos / Hebraios / Hebraïs / Hebraïsti). The translators are wrong, because the Qumran scrolls have proven beyond doubt that Hebrew was the principal literary language for the Jews of the late Second-Temple period, the period when Jesus lived. Evidently, at the time, the Hebrew tongue had been revived. A few Qumran scrolls point to the use of Hebrew for speech as well as writing. We may safely say that in Jesus' time, at least in Jerusalem and its vicinity, the people spoke various dialects of Hebrew along with Aramaic. Luke tells that the inscription on Jesus' cross was written in Greek, Latin and Hebrew, which shows that Greek was important too. Aramaic, that actually stands for a number of languages, was probably a means of communication amongst the non-Jewish population of Haaretz and must have been prevalent in the Jewish Diaspora.

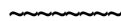
The importance of Aramaic as a medium of communication in the Middle-East crescent can hardly be overestimated. Without it, the proliferation of the Christian faith in this part of the world would have been unthinkable. The first translation of the Gospels is therefore in Aramaic. We should not be surprised that the koine-Greek, the dialect of the common man, and of course the spoken Hebrew of that time, had loan words from Aramaic. An example of this is the word 'gehenna', that appears twelve times in the New Testament, which of course is written in Greek. Gehenna is Aramaic and is usually translated with Hell.

The diffusion of the Greek language took place by means of conquest. Although the action was man's, the ruling was God's. That it entered into the divine plan of providence we may know from the fact that it was a subject of prophecy. In a vision of Daniel 7, in the first year of Darius Hystaspes, it is written: "Behold, there shall stand up three kings in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all, and by his strength and through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia."

Of this great attempt of Xerxes against Greece I have given account in my last letter. After the retreat of Xerxes into Asia, there was no attempt of the Greeks to make reprisals for many years. Unfortunately they were divided among themselves, and exhausted their energies in mutual quarrels. But the ages immediately succeeding the Persian invasion were the most wonderful in intellectual develop-

ment that the world has ever seen. More great minds were produced within that century than in any other within the recorded history of our race. Providence seems to have kept back that wonderful nation until her intellectual treasure-house was full, and then to have sent her forth conquering – to conquer not to destroy, but to fertilize the lands she overflowed, not to extinguish civilization by barbarism, but to carry intellectual light to those who were sitting in the regions of ignorance and darkness. Nothing occurred of great interest between the Persians and the Greeks for nearly eighty years. The Greeks went on to create the most beautiful literature and the profoundest philosophy human genius ever produced, and their mutual contentions perfected them in the science and practice of war.

At that time a circumstance took place which gave them a stronger proof of their great superiority over the Persians than even their victories over Xerxes. Cyrus the Younger was sent by his brother Artaxerxes to Asia Minor as the governor of the western provinces. Here he became acquainted with the martial valor of the Greeks, and thought by their aid to march to Susa and dethrone his brother. For this purpose he collected an army of more than 100,000 of whom 13,000 were Greeks, and advanced into the plains of the East. He was there met by his brother with an army of 900,000, was defeated and left dead on the field. The 13,000 Greeks, now reduced to 10,000, found themselves two thousand miles from the nearest Grecian city where they would be safe, without one day's provisions, in the midst of enemy's country. Undismayed by this most appalling condition, they commenced their retreat, cut their way through enemies in front and guarded themselves from foes in the rear. They went over mountains covered with snow, through trackless forests, and over rivers rapid and deep, and reached their homes in safety. This exploit filled the world with their fame. Perhaps more than anything else it convinced the Greeks that, few as they were, they held the destinies of Asia at their disposal. But confederated republics, however efficient for defence, are generally ill-prepared for conquest. It was not till more than forty years after this, when all Greece had been subjected to Philip, King of Macedonia, that the nation turned its eyes to the conquest of the East. Philip had himself elected general-in-chief of all the Greeks for the prosecution of the war with their ancient enemies, the Persians. Just at the moment when the conqueror of Greece was meditating a descent upon the Persian Empire, he fell by the hand of an assassin, leaving his Kingdom to his son Alexander, a youth of twenty. This happened 380 years ago and may be considered as one of the great epochs of the world.



## THE FOURTH LETTER OF THE SCHOOL OF HILLEL

ALEXANDER, by his personal endowments as conqueror and statesman, did more in twelve years to affect the future condition of the world than any uninspired man that has ever lived. He was in no respect better than his modern rivals, and was animated by no better motive than personal ambition. In the hands of God he was used as an instrument of lasting good to mankind. Endowed with an intellect of unusual power and comprehension, he received a thorough education from one of the greatest philosopher's that ever lived. At the age of eighteen he began to mingle affairs of state with study, and became a soldier as well as a scholar. At the age of twenty, when summoned to assume the reins of the sovereign empire, in fact, of the Greeks, he stood before the world as a perfect representative of his nation. He combined their genius and learning with their valor and conduct. Entering Asia with the sword in one hand and the poems of Homer in the other he became the armed leader of Grecian learning, art and civilization. Wherever he went, Greece went with him. His conquests were not so much those of Macedonian arms as of Grecian letters. Wherever he went, he took with him the genius of Homer, the sublime soul of Plato, and the practical wisdom of Socrates. Not only monarchies sprung up in his wake, but schools of philosophy and academies of learning.

Entering Asia with an army of 35,000 men, in the space of twelve years he made himself master of the whole Persian Empire, and of many nations which had never been subjected to the Persian yoke. He carried the Grecian language and manners to the Indus, and subjected to his power nearly as large a portion of the human race as there was in existence. His first battle gave him Asia Minor, and the second, all of Syria up to the Euphrates. Egypt, the whole valley of the Nile, surrendered without striking a blow. The third great battle, on the banks of the Euphrates, opened to him the whole of the Asiatic plains up to the mountains which bounded the habitations of the Scythian tribes. Wherever he went, the Greek language and literature took up their abode, and every city on this side the Euphrates in a few ages became the residence of Greek philosophers, poets, rhetoricians, grammarians, historians, till the whole circuitous shore of the Mediterranean became almost as Grecian as Greece itself. Our beloved home land, of course, came under his sway, and the influence of his career on the fortunes of us Jews was more decisive, perhaps, than upon any other nation, for it was his conquest alone which introduced the Greek language into our holy land.

So much are the most important events turned on by the slightest causes, that the opportunities of one's life, almost daily exposed to destruction by the dangers of war, relate to the issue whether the records of the holy oracles (the Old Testament) should ever be sent to

the perishing world through this beautiful language. It has been declared that when the mighty warrior and statesman was approaching Jerusalem, Juddua, who was our High Priest at the time, came out to meet him in solemn procession, and that Alexander was so struck by his appearance that he not only spared the city, but granted to us Jews many favors that he did not show to others, giving as a reason thereof that he had seen the same person in a dream before he left Macedonia, who had assured him of the conquest of the Persian Empire.

From Syria he passed on to Egypt, and his conquest of that country had a greater influence upon the future condition of our nation than the conquest of Judeah itself, for on his return from Ethiopia he sailed down the western branch of the Nile, and, with the instinct of genius, fixed upon the site of a city between the lake Mareotis and the sea, which he called after his own name [Alexandria]. It sprung up immediately to be one of the most magnificent cities of the world, reigning as a sort of queen of the East, as the mart of commerce and the seat of wealth. To populate this city, we Jews were invited by the most liberal offers. A large colony was formed, where only the Greek language was used. Hence, it became necessary to have our Scriptures translated into Greek, or we would have lost our knowledge of them altogether. It is said on good authority that the occasion of translating the Scriptures into the Greek language was the desire of Ptolemy Philadelphus, to have a copy to go into the Alexandrian library, which was begun not long after his death. However that might be, such a version we know was made, which is now the standard of the world. It was made about three hundred years ago, and by this translation our theology has gone to the whole world. Thus we see that divine providence works the nations of the earth like a machine.

Another important factor of God's providence is the rising of the Roman Empire. While all these things were transpiring in the East, a state was rising into the forefront in the southern half of Italy destined to exert a more extensive influence upon the world by her arms than Greece did by her learning. About 750 years ago a small band of refugees from the ruins of Troy joined other adventurers, and established themselves on the banks of the Tiber. Their government at first was monarchical. They were poor in resources, temperate and frugal in their habits, but, either from choice or necessity, warlike from the first. Italy was not then a new nor an uncultivated country. It must have contained states and cities of great wealth, for there have been discovered vast receptacles for the dead dating back much earlier than the time of Romulus.

These settlers were a nation of soldiers and statesmen, trained from their earliest years to politics and war. Their monarchy lasted about 200 years. While that lasted, there was little indication that these 'Romans' were to become the masters of the world. The establishment of a popular government, however, rapidly developed their national characteristics of love of conquest and military glory. This

character once formed, and all honor and promotion coming from the people, none could hope to succeed without bending the whole force of his talents to that object that every citizen had most at heart: the honor of the Roman name, and the extension of their dominions over foreign nations.

The Senate, composed either of the most distinguished and influential of the citizens, or of those who had made their way through the regular grades of the magistracy to the highest which was known in the state, constituted a body, which, for more than a thousand years, for talent, for weight, for wisdom and experience, was unrivalled in the history of the world. The Roman from youth to age lived in the eye of his country. To gain the favor of the arbiters of his destiny was his perpetual consideration and his constant endeavor. Thus, from the first, every faculty was put upon the utmost stretch, and nothing was omitted through the whole course of his education, which could give him eloquence before the people, valor and conduct in the field, and wisdom in the Senate.

The whole nation was a sort of military school. No man could be a candidate for office until he had served his country ten years as a soldier in the camp. The result was that, by thus bending all the powers of human nature in one direction, they excelled all mankind in that art to which they were exclusively devoted. They became a nation of soldiers, and, pursuing with steady aim and untiring perseverance one exclusive object for eight centuries, they naturally became the conquerors of the world. A Roman army was the most terrible object that ever trod the earth, it was a vast human machine contrived for the subjugation of the world, instinct combined with intelligence, shielded from assault by an almost impenetrable armor, and animated with a courage which was best displayed in the shock of battle. When we hear of a Roman camp, we cease to wonder how that nation carried conquest from the sands of Africa to the borders of the world up to the skirts of the Arabian desert. After the age of seventeen, every Roman was liable to be enrolled and sent to war at any time. When he arrived at the camp he entered on a course of life in which ease and luxury were altogether unknown. He commenced a discipline of hardships that is almost incredible, and of which there was no end.

With all this training it took the Romans 500 years to conquer Italy. It took 200 more, and they were masters of the known world. About 100 years ago the Roman conquest reached our holy land, and the commander in chief, Pompey the Great, polluted with impious tread the Holy of Holies; his legions planted their standard upon the rampart of the Temple [in 63 BC]. About 70 years ago Julius Cæsar subjected the liberties of his country, putting an end to the Roman Republic, which had existed for about 400 years [he succeeded Pompey and started the institute of the Roman emperor], ...and 50 years ago all the world was given peace.

Thus it is that the Grecian letters and Roman arms were founded on the mission of Moses. Also the Roman statesman was made quite as subservient to the great plan of providence as the valor of the Roman commanders, for they alone of all the nations that ever existed were able to retain and consolidate their conquests. Their polity, perfected by the experience of ages, greatly alleviated the burden of their yoke, and it is often said that after conquering like savages they ruled like sages. If it is objected: 'How can God's providence permit so many minds to come under a rule so hostile to liberty and freedom?' To this I reply: 'The governments destroyed are always worse than the ones set up in their place, though it may not always be seen by man.'





## THE FIFTH LETTER OF THE SCHOOL OF HILLEL

MAN is essentially a human being. He is made so by the faculties of his mind, as well as the emotions of his heart. He is so both by the intellectual and moral nature. One of the first and most spontaneous exercises of the reason of man is the investigation of cause and effect, and one of the first convictions which are developed in the mind is that there cannot be an effect without a cause. The next is, that the nature of a cause must correspond with the nature of the effect, and can certainly be known by it. It is so in the works of man. When we see an exquisite painting it is impossible for us to doubt it having been the creation of intelligence. When Aristippus [a Greek philosopher] was cast on a shore where there appeared to be no inhabitants, he wandered about until he found some mathematical diagrams traced in the sand. "Courage", said he, "my friend, I find the traces of men." And so I say to the wandering and forsaken Jews of God: 'Courage, I see the finger of God pointing.' Men see in everything the traces of power and wisdom. Nay, we know that we are the effects of superior power and wisdom. Unbelief has not prevailed much in the world, and it has been quite rare among the heathens as among those who had a revelation. So much for abstract religious convictions.

Men are led to God by their understanding and by their moral nature. On the first dawn of his faculties, man experiences within him certain moral perceptions, by which to decide: this is right, meritorious, honorable, and that is wrong, base, despicable, worthy of punishment. This moral nature, he finds, exists not only in himself, but in others too. It is a universal attribute of a human. It is not a fortuitous endowment. It is given to man by his creator as the law of his action. It cannot come from any other source. The moral power in man consists only of the faculty to see things because they exist. God, however, sees things [in his mind] and then they are realities, and He both created the things and us. Our consciousness of the potential to choose between the good and the bad, creates within us a feeling of obligation to the supreme being that made us.

Connected with this idea of God, which seems to be fundamental and universal, is that of a providence, an intelligence, which not only made the world, but governs it, which, therefore, knows the past, the present, and the future, and which, of course, observes not only all that is seen by mortal eyes, but likewise all that passes in the human mind. Men have noticed that the general course of events is that vice should be punished and virtue rewarded. As a matter of fact, vice is regarded by God with displeasure; and as He now punishes it, so He will continue to do. As a good man now and ever must be the object of his approbation, and as God is infinite in power, the good man will be forever rewarded. Such are the natural convictions of humankind,

which result from the operations of his own mind. Such are the convictions of the heathen world. The great men of the old world, poets and philosophers, have entertained such opinions in all times past. They all take for granted one superior being and hence all others are inferior beings that are to feel obligated to Him. This is not only the last and highest conclusion of the human intellect, but likewise the consenting voice of the most ancient tradition.

But then, even in the best minds the subject was surrounded with great doubt and difficulties. God himself is an object of none of the senses. It is in vain, therefore, for the human mind to form an idea of the mode of his existence. Not being, then, a matter of sense or of demonstration, the wisest of men, though he might arrive at the truth, could not feel sure that it was truth. Wanting certainty himself, he could not impart certainty to others. He could not propagate his doctrine with confidence. The wisest of men, therefore, wanted that authority, which was requisite even for the propagation of the truth. They wanted certainty for themselves and authority for others. Now, certainty and authority are the very things necessary to make a religion powerful in the world. While religion, therefore, was in the hands of the philosophers – that is, the thinkers – it effected next to nothing in guiding and restraining mankind, it being merely a matter of opinion that is, of dim probability. One man felt that he had just as good a right to his opinion as another. One philosopher differed from another, and thus weakened the authority of the opinions of both. A religion, therefore, in the true sense of the word that is, one that shall take hold of the faith and control the conduct of humankind, must have both certainty and authority. Neither can be obtained without revelation, inspiration and miracles.

Had Moses himself received no divine aid, either from inspiration or miracles, even if he had uttered the same truths and laid down the same precepts, he would have accomplished nothing in the world. His doctrines would have rested for evidence on his own reason, and his precepts upon his own personal character and influence. Another man of equal wisdom and the same weight of character might have overthrown what he had built up. Besides, his manner would have been entirely different. No man can inspire confidence in others who has not confidence in himself. No man in high religious matters can have full confidence in himself without conscious divine inspiration. It was reasonable, therefore, in him, when sent by God into Egypt to bring out his enslaved brethren, to demand miraculous credentials, and without them he could neither have brought them out nor established among them the religion he was commissioned to teach. This distinction was perceived by the people, though the reason upon which it was founded was beyond their comprehension. The difference arose from the difference between knowledge and opinion. One is necessarily proposed with diffidence, the other with confidence, which no one uninspired can counterfeit. Those who knew best about these things among the heathens had no means of guiding the multi-

tude. But then, humankind must have a religion. The understanding demands it, and the heart craves it. It is not with the multitude as with the philosophers, a matter of quiet contemplation. They must act as well as think and feel. The sentiments of the heart demand expression, and expression they will have, through the actions of the hands, and through the words of the mouth. Occasions were continually occurring demanding immediate action. Some public calamity bowed down the hearts of thousands, and seemed to indicate the wrath of superior powers. Those powers must be supplicated and appeased. Who shall contrive the rite? Not the wisest, but the man of the greatest boldness and readiness of invention. Once established, proscription took the place of reason, and habit consecrated that which was at first wanting in propriety.

Then, again, religion has much to do with imagination. Everything related to God is invisible. Related to God himself, there is nothing positively [no tangible experience] to determine and fix our ideas, for in pure spirituality our imagination finds no play, has nothing to lay hold of. Still, it is impossible to keep our imaginations quiet, even in our most solemn devotions. And so it appears absolutely impossible to altogether separate the 'idea of God' from 'the corporiety of God', and this holds even for the most spiritual man. How much more impossible, then, must it have been for the uninstructed heathen with the best of intentions? Therefore, diversities and great imperfection are to be present in heathen opinions and worship. And such we find to be the case.

Note: The foregoing is in line with the Platonic philosophy that diametrically opposes pure thought against matter, which is something that is to be observed. Indeed, Plato was the first to systematically teach the difference between thought and observation. Aristotle developed Plato's ideas further: thought requires a capacity of one's own; this cannot be something belonging to the organism but comes from outside to the person (i.e. from outside man's organic reality). Seen in this way that capacity cannot be otherwise than being a gift from the supreme being.

Certain of the existence of a God, yet uncertain of the mode of his existence, it was natural that the human mind should run into a thousand vagaries and a thousand errors. It was natural that mankind should fancy that they had found God in those parts of the material universe where his attributes are most displayed. Hence, the most ancient species of idolatry is said to have been that which deified the heavenly bodies, the sun and moon and the hosts of heaven. The sun is perhaps the brightest emblem of God, except for the human soul. To us 'he' is, in fact, the mightiest instrument, as it were, the right hand of the benignity of the Most High. He riseth, and the shadows of night flee away. Joy and beauty go forth to meet him in the morning. At his call universal life riseth, as it were, from a universal death. He draweth aside the curtains of darkness and sayeth unto man: 'Come forth!' He shineth, and the face of nature is glad. He hideth his face, and all things mourn. He withdraweth from the wes-

tern sky, and darkness resumes her ancient dominion, and all things seem to wait his return. The soul itself, as it were, deprived of its support, gradually loses its energies, and sinks into a profound repose. What wonder, then, that in the innate ignorance of humankind about the true nature of God, the wise should have worshipped the sun as the fittest emblem of God, and the ignorant as God himself.

Such was probably the idolatry of the nations from among whom Abraham was called to the worship of the true God. Such was the worship of the Chaldeans and Egyptians. It is a record of the recorded teachings that Abram, when returning from the grotto – where he was born – to the city of Babylon, gazed on a certain star: “Behold”, said he, “the God, the Lord of the universe.” But as he gazed the star sank away and was gone. And as Abram felt that the Lord is unchangeable, he was disillusioned (for how otherwise could the star sink away?) Again, the full moon appeared, and he said: “This is our God.” But the moon withdrew and he was disillusioned. All the rest of the night he spent in profound meditation. At sunrise he stood before the gates of Babylon and saw all the people prostrate before the rising sun. “Wondrous orb!”, he exclaimed, “Thou surely art the creator and ruler of nations.” And later: “But thou, like the rest, hasteneth away. So the creator is to be found somewhere else.” How much more sublime, as well as rational, the doctrine which he then originated, and the sentiments that were afterward expressed by one of his followers, which make these glorious orbs only the manifestations of something far more glorious!

One great source of corruption was the priesthood. It seems natural that men should be chosen to conduct religious service. They became better acquainted with these rites than others, and are more sacred by the power of association that renders their ministration more satisfactory, and, of course, more profitable to those in whose behalf they perform sacred offices. A priesthood seemed to be so necessary, but there is nothing more dangerous to a nation than to have a priesthood that is governed by the political parties of the nation, as was done by all nations except our own. Here, the priest was governed by the laws of Moses, and it was impossible for the priest or anybody else to change them. It is to be attributed to these heathen priests that idolatry is so common. Go down into Egypt, and you find men worshipping an ox. Cats and crocodiles occupy the places of the inferior gods, and are worshipped by the poor. Thus in all nations, except our own, this dreadful state of idolatry prevails. The idolatry of Greece is no better. Athens contains many statues erected to imaginary gods. Her superstition is not only bigoted but bloody. It was there that Socrates suffered death merely on suspicion of maintaining opinions subversive to the popular faith.



## THE SIXTH LETTER OF THE SCHOOL OF HILLEL

THE objective of all religion as a positive institution is to enlighten the understanding and cultivate the devotions. The mind must think and the heart must worship. So it must be through life. The cares of the world are continually effacing religious impressions, and truths once clearly seen and vividly felt, by lapse of time wax dim and lose the impact of present realities. The soul, moreover, feels the want of support and guidance of religion at all times. Every day, the soul experiences the need of communion with God. It is as necessary as our daily food. Therefore, all religion has its sacred rites, by which the heart speaks to God and God communicates to the heart. So, all religions have some mode of training the mind and moving the affections, of taking hold of the memory and thus perpetuating themselves. This is derived from an innate consciousness. Should God extinguish all the lights of the world and blind every human eye, religion would be just the same.

But these outward institutions must all be adapted to the present condition of men. Religion can only use those instruments which are furnished to hand. In the absence of writing it must use ceremonies and forms, which have an everyday meaning, and thus come to be symbolic of certain truths. Thus, our patriarchal religion consisted almost entirely of prayer and sacrifice. The Mosaic religion, which came after the invention of letters, added to prayer and sacrifice a written code of duty, a formal declaration of truths and principles, which lay at the foundation of the whole institution. At the time, throughout our society [qahal] the patriarchal element was still strong and predominant. Yet, there was no explicit mode of religious instruction. This was enjoined on the heads of families: "And these words which I command thee this day, thou shalt teach them to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house." As the written laws were scarce and hard to get, it was said: "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand and as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house and upon thy gates." Then the Levites were to stand and say with a loud voice: "Cursed be the man that maketh any graven image." Then all the people held up their hands and said: "Amen". So he went through the whole law. Then, at the annual meeting upon the mountains, at new moon, all the people met and held up their hands and cried: "Amen". Thus, it is evident that devotion predominated over instruction. The cultivation of the heart was made more prominent than that of [rational] understanding.

In the Hebrew commonwealth, religion and politics were amalgamated; the Mosaic code prescribed religious as well as civil duties. The Levites, of course, were the judges and magistrates, as well as

the religious teachers of the people. As, in the beginning, books were scarce, we find in the third year of the reign of Jehoshaphat that he sent princes and Levites to teach the people. And they took the book of the law and went through all the cities of Judeah and taught the people the law of the Lord.

This same thing was carried out in all the Jewish life. Our tabernacle in the wilderness, and afterward in the holy land, was intended as a perpetual memorial of God, and a symbol of his presence. It called the people off from idolatry, and reminded them that their worship was to be directed to Jehovah alone. Its services, and those afterward of the Temple, were perpetually renewed every morning and every evening, that no pious Israelite should ever feel that the duties of adoration and gratitude could be omitted for a single day. The morning and evening sacrifice, we have every reason to believe, was to the religiously disposed an essential aid to devotion through the many centuries of the continuance of that imposing rite. Then, if we transfer these imposing ceremonies to the Temple, this godly house was the rallying point of our political power, the consecrated seat of our religion, and the heart of our national affections. It was built by Solomon more than a thousand years ago. It was built on Mount Moriah, in the southeastern part of Jerusalem. It was built for worship alone. It was intended as a place for national worship.

Note: The term Jews only came into use after the Babylonian Exile (at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC). During the Exile, ten tribes of Israel wandered far away and until this day their whereabouts are unknown. Only the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, joined by the priestly caste, came back to the Land of Israel, then called Judeah (including Samaria and Idumea). Since then they are called Jews. The phrase: "This same thing was carried out in all the Jewish life." is a misnomer and should have been: "...among all the tribes of the people of Israel".

The tabernacle consisted of four enclosures, one within another on three sides, but having a common wall on the fourth. Only one of these was covered with a roof, in our meaning of the term, and that was the last or innermost enclosure, the Holy of Holies, containing the Ark, the Cherubim, and the Mercy Seat. The outer enclosure, into which all nations were permitted to enter, was very large. The second was the court of women, so-called not because none but women were permitted to enter there, but because they were permitted to go no further. Within this was the court of Israel, which again surrounded on three sides, was only for the priests, where was the great altar, upon which the daily sacrifice was offered morning and evening.

Oh, these sacred ordinances! How can the world do without them? It seems that the world could do as well without the light of the sun, as well without food to eat, or water to drink, as to do without these doctrines and teachings of the people of Israel [the translation states 'of the Jews']. But they are all gone! The city, the Temple, the doctrine, the priests, the law, and the nation, are all gone. Is it so that

God has become tired of his own appointments? Or does He see a defect in his own ways, or has He become dissatisfied with his own Covenant made to our fathers and to their children?

I write you these letters, my beloved countrymen, asking you to look at these things, and find out the cause of our abandonment. Is it the cause that sent our fathers into Egypt? Or is it caused by the same thing that sent them into Babylon? Let us look and find out the cause, so that we may seek a remedy. And let us not forget the morning and evening sacrifice. Let us turn our faces toward that Holy Temple and pray. Although it is not in existence in fact, yet it lives in each of our hearts, and shall ever live. Though we may be thousands of miles away, and be sold into bondage and bound in chains, yet we will not, we cannot, forget our land, our religion, and our God! He is the God of Abraham, and still is merciful, and will remember his promises and keep his Covenant made with our fathers. And so shall I abide.



**THE SEVENTH LETTER  
OF THE SCHOOL OF HILLEL  
THE EXPECTATION OF THE JEWS  
– A CHRISTIAN SERMON –**

NOT only was the expectation of a remarkable personage universally prevalent among the Jews at the time of the appearance of Christ, but the phraseology was already in use, which designated what He was to be and accomplish. There was at the time of Christ a messianic phraseology derived from different parts of the Old Testament, which embodied and expressed all their anticipations. Whatever inspiration accompanied the first composition of the prophecies, there was evidently none in their interpretation. This much was certain, that if there was to be a Messiah there was to be a new dispensation. No one knew precisely what He was to be. Imagination, of course, was set to work, and each one for himself formed his own and made whatever passage of the Old Testament he choose to be descriptive of his person and office. Not only the imagination, but the passions were concerned in the formation of their expectations. The pious thought of Him as a religious reformer, and the new state of things to be a condition of higher religious perfection. The rabbis interpreted, concerning the days of the Messiah, such passages as this from Jeremiah 31: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it on their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying: ‘Know the Lord’. For they all shall know Me, from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.” This seems to have been the expectation entertained by the Samaritans, if the woman with whom Christ talked at the well of Jacob is to be considered as speaking of the sentiments of the nation.

The universal expectation [in Jesus’ time] seems to have been that He was to be a prophet like unto Moses, yet greater. In accordance with this sentiment Peter, in one of his first discourses after the resurrection of Jesus, cites the promise of Moses to the Israelites just before his death, as applicable to Christ. “A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me, Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul, which shall not hear the prophet, shall



be destroyed from among the people.” These were the sentiments of those who had seen the miracle of feeding the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes, bearing so strong a resemblance to the feeding of the Israelites in the desert. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, said: “This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.”

But another and much larger group advanced for the messianic prophecies a more worldly meaning. The great personage whose coming they shortly expected was to be a king, but greater than any who had sat upon the Jewish throne. It was with this expectation, evidently, that his disciples followed Him through his whole ministry. And even after his resurrection they seem for a while to have entertained the same hopes. One of the first questions they asked Him after he rose was: “Are You going to restore in this time the Kingdom to Israel?” And at the last supper they disputed “which of them should be the greatest”, that is, who should be highest in office in the new kingdom that He was about to set up. It was with this idea that He was hailed by the multitude into Jerusalem with the shout “Hosanna to the Son of David”. This was the idea that Nathaniel meant to express when he said, on receiving the evidence that He was a prophet: “Rabbi, You are the Son of God, You are the King of Israel.” That it was his temporal character to which Nathaniel here referred we have sufficient evidence in the information which first directed his attention to Jesus. “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

The part of the Old Testament from which this title and expectation were taken was principally the second Psalm. The person described in this poem is represented as exalted by God to be a king on Mount Zion in Judeah. The surrounding heathens are represented as being enraged. But God has nevertheless determined that He shall reign and as a king sets his son upon his throne while He yet lives. So has God, as supreme King of Israel, exalted this person to share his authority, and pledges his own power to support his throne. One idea of the Kingdom of the Messiah, derived from this Psalm, was that He was not only to reign over the Jews, but destroy all other nations. “Why do the heathens rage and the people imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying: ‘Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.’ He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me: ‘Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of Me, and I will give You the heathens for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.’” This Psalm was interpreted by almost all the Jews as relating to the Messiah, and the more readily

so as the title Anointed is rendered in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Bible) as Christos, so that it there reads: "The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Christ [instead of his Anointed]." The Messiah, therefore, was to reign on Mount Zion, one of the mountains on which Jerusalem was built, and reign over the Jews and by God's assistance subdue the heathens by war and conquest, break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Such was the kingdom that the great majority of the Jews expected their Messiah to establish.

The expression 'Kingdom of Heaven' is taken from the second chapter of the Book of Daniel. After foretelling that there should arise four great monarchies, the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman, the last of which should be a kingdom of iron, he goes on to say: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Another passage states: "I saw in the night a vision, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given unto Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his Kingdom such that it shall not be destroyed."

From this last passage was probably derived the opinion once held, that the Messiah should never die. Jesus said on a certain occasion: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." The people answered Him: "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever. And how do You say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" The new dispensation under the figure of a kingdom was the subject of the commencing petition of one of the chief prayers recited in their synagogues, from Sabbath to Sabbath, and has been so for ages. There was a time specified in the Book of Daniel of seventy weeks, which was to intervene between the [start of the] building of the second Temple and the 'times' [plural] of the Messiah, which, interpreting according to the prophetic style a day for a year, would bring the period of his appearance somewhere near the time when John the Baptist began to preach.

So prevalent had this expectation become, that it had spread beyond the Holy Land. Tacitus, a historian who wrote in Italia, records the fact that among many "there was a persuasion that in the ancient books of the priesthood it was written that at this precise time the East should become mighty, and that those issuing from Judeah should rule the world." (Histories xiii) Suetonius, another Roman historian, writes "that in the East an ancient and constant opinion prevailed that it was fated [foretold] that there should issue at that

time from Judeah some who should obtain universal dominion.” (Vespasian iv)

This confident expectation of the Jews had already caused no little political disturbance. It was this proud anticipation of universal conquest, which made them so restive under the government of the Romans. That they who were destined to reign over the world and whose King Messiah was to have the heathens for his inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, who was to break with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Psalm 2), should be in vassalage to a foreign power, was more than they could bear. Josephus relates that about the time of the birth of Christ, when Quirinius was sent to take a census of Judeah [Josephus talks about the 2<sup>nd</sup> census], Judas, a native of Gamala in Galilee, rose up and resisted the Roman Commissioner, and raised a great rebellion. (Ant. 18:1) He is mentioned likewise by Gamaliel in his speech before the Jewish Sanhedrin, when the apostles were brought before them for preaching Jesus as the Messiah, immediately after his ascension. “After this man [Theudas], rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of taxing, and drew away much people after him. He also perished, and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.” Josephus speaks generally of the troubles of those times, without specifying causes: “And now Judeah was full of robberies, and as the several companies of the seditious would light upon anyone to head them, he was created a king immediately, in order to do mischief to the public.” (Ant. 10:8)

This was exactly the state of the country during the ministry of Jesus, and it explains his caution in proclaiming Himself the Messiah, and his withdrawal as soon as a multitude collected about Him and manifested any tendency to sedition or disturbance. It is recorded of Him after the miracle of feeding the five thousand, and the declaration made concerning Him – “This of a truth is that prophet which should come into the world.” – that Jesus having perceived that they would come and take Him by force and make Him a king, that He then decided to depart again unto a mountain Himself alone. In another instance, likewise, when He had healed the man at the pool of Bethesda: “And the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place.”

Such being the expectation of the Jews, as we learn from profane history, a man of singular habits and appearance began to preach in a secluded part of Judeah, where there were but few large towns: “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” This man was of the sacerdotal tribe and had been consecrated to God from his infancy by the vow of the Nazarite. His habits and dress were those of a hermit, his food such as he could pick up in the fields and woods. He was literally: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” He professed to have been moved by divine impulse to proclaim the immediate coming of the Messiah. A man of such singular appea-

rance, bearing such an important message, produced a great sensation, and excited the strongest curiosity. Crowds from all parts of Judeah flocked together to see and hear him. Some even thought he was the Messiah. His fame soon reached Jerusalem, and the Jewish authorities sent a deputation of priests and Levites to inquire who he was. He told them that he was not the Messiah, but was sent to introduce Him. "I came to point Him out to Israel." [Not found in the Bible.] Here was undoubtedly stated the true reason why he was raised up by divine providence to prepare the Jewish mind for the great message from God they were going to receive, to shape their ideas from the crude mass of traditions which had existed among them into some resemblance to the dispensation that the Messiah was about to establish. "There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness that all men through him might believe. He was not the Light, but was sent to bear witness of the Light."

"The effect of his preaching was precisely what was intended. He produced a strong impression upon the public mind, and, though he wrought no miracle, all held him to be a prophet. He presented a strong contrast, and probably by design, to the pretenders to divine mission, who appeared about that time. It was on this account that the multitudes, who gathered together unto him, created no uneasiness among the public authorities. A man like John, who clothed himself in the coarsest attire, in a country where the higher classes were studious of ornament, and all who had any pretensions to official dignity were distinguished by gorgeous apparel, would naturally escape all suspicion of political ambition. A religious teacher, evidently sincere and pious and withal free from fanaticism and enthusiasm in which reason has been taken away, must – after the cessation of prophecy for 400 years – have caused a great impression. He must have recalled to the minds of his countrymen the days when Elijah in similar simplicity and grave austerity stood up as a prophet of God, verily as the champion of religion. Some, indeed, mistook John for Elijah risen from the dead, who, their traditions affirmed, was to come to anoint and inaugurate the Messiah.

Note: Elijah could not have 'risen from the dead', because he went up to heaven in a whirlwind; he never died. (2 Kings 2) If Elijah had come, he would have come back. (Luke 9:8) Because he never died, the teaching went that once he would return and die a natural death.

The almost simultaneous appearance of the Light, and the witness to the Light, without any concert or collusion, was a strong testimony to the divine mission of both. With this argument alone Jesus on one occasion silenced those who questioned his claim to be the Messiah. He thus answered: "The baptism of John, whence was it, from Heaven or from men?" They reasoned among themselves, saying: "If we say from Heaven, then He will say: Why then did you not believe on Him, and, of course, believe in Him to whom He bore witness?"

But if we say from men, the people will stone us, for all count John as a prophet.”

It does not appear that John had any particular person in mind when he commenced his mission but was merely informed by God, who sent him to preach, that the Messiah should be pointed out to him by some miraculous appearance. He had known Him previously as someone of great piety and excellence, for when Jesus came to be baptized, John said to Him: “I have need to be baptized by You, and You come to me?” But as the Messiah he had no knowledge of Him, for he testifies: “I did not know Him”, that is, as the Messiah, “but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me: ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”

John collected around him a company of disciples whom he instructed in the mysteries of religion, and many of them seem to have remained with him after he was cast into prison, till he was beheaded by Herod.

We have reason to conclude, I think, that his teaching shadowed forth, though imperfectly, the general system of Christianity. Jesus says of him “that among them that are born of women, there has not arisen a greater prophet than John the Baptist.” And they bear a strong resemblance to the opening discourses of Christ: “The people said to Him: ‘What shall we do then?’ He answered and said to them: ‘He that has two coats, let him impart unto him that has none, and he that has meat, let him do likewise.’ Then came the taxgatherers to be baptized, and said unto Him: ‘Master, what shall we do?’ And He said to them: ‘Exact no more than is appointed you.’ And the soldiers likewise asked Him, saying: ‘And what shall we do?’ And He said to them: ‘Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages.’” That John preached the essential teachings of Christianity would appear from what we read in the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Acts: “And a certain Jew, named Apollos, born in Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord, and, being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue, whom, when Aquilla and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded to him the way of the Lord more perfectly.” In the next chapter we read: “And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, he said unto them: ‘Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?’ And they said to him: ‘We have not heard much whether there be any Holy Ghost.’ And he said to them: ‘Unto what then were you baptized?’ And they said: ‘Unto John’s baptism.’” Now, here are two cases in which those who had heard nothing but the teachings of John are said to have been Christians, to have been

taught the things of the Lord, and to have been disciples. It follows then, of course, that John the Baptist taught the essential truths of Christianity. The object of the Gospels being to record the teaching of Jesus, that of John is passed over in a very cursory manner. But that he taught often and much, as well as prophesied the coming of the Messiah, we have every reason to believe. His disciples, however, mingled some of the old forms with their new teachings, for they fasted often, an observance that Jesus declared agreed no better with the new religion than a piece of new cloth with an old garment, or new wine with old bottles.

Note: This view about fasting is mistaken. One should bear in mind that in the early church there was probably just one copy per community of the Gospels and maybe some other parts, which bound together were to become the New Testament. Not having a copy within easy reach, people, in their theological discussions, had to rely on memory. The above view about fasting is another piece of evidence that underscores the authenticity of the School of Hillel letters.

The correct view is as follows: Jesus told his followers they should not fast while He was with them, but should do so afterwards. He said: "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. No man puts a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, etc." (Mt. 9:15-17)

The mind of John the Baptist furnishes a remarkable example, we often see, of partial divine illumination, the clearest knowledge on some points and absolute ignorance on others. By the light of inspiration he shadowed forth in a few words the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven, whose approach he foretold, and showed it to be something entirely different from the expectation of the Jews, handed down from remote ages. Yet, of its details his ideas seem to have been vague, and he appears to have had no certain knowledge that Jesus was the Messiah, though he had baptized Him and received the heavenly sign of which they had been forewarned.

One truth, He announced, bears evident marks of supernatural origin – since it contradicted the conceptions and prejudices of the age – that the Messiah and his Kingdom were not to be national, not belonging de jure and exclusively to the posterity of Abraham alone. There is a maxim in the rabbinic writings, as common as the very letters of the alphabet, that "All Israel has a share in the 'World to Come' [Olam Haba]", that is, in the Messianic Kingdom, merely by virtue of their descent from Abraham. They had not the slightest notion that it was to be a kingdom selected from Israel and other nations, a new community by no means coextensive with the seed of Abraham. That it was to be a moral and a spiritual kingdom was a far cry from their usual concepts. "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand! (...) Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance, and say not, we have Abraham for our father, for God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones." Do not imagine that you are to belong to the Kingdom of God merely because you are descended from

Abraham. God is able to raise up children to Abraham from a source now as improbable to you as the stones beneath your feet, from among the Gentiles even, whom you are accustomed to call dogs, and count as the scum of the earth. A discrimination is about to take place, not between the children of Abraham and other nations, but between the good and the bad even among the Jews themselves. "Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (...) I indeed baptize you with water, but He who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." In short, He shall raise those who obey Him to a higher degree of spiritual knowledge, perfection, and power, and punish those who disobey Him with the severest suffering. "His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." This is the same idea expressed in stronger language, the meaning of which is this: The Messiah's Kingdom is not, as you Jews expect, to comprehend the good and the bad merely because they are the descendants of Abraham, but is to embrace the good only, who are to be gathered into a separate community, while the bad are to be abandoned to destruction, which their own wicked courses will inevitably bring upon them.

He not only preached the Kingdom of God as a separate society, distinct from the Jewish nation, but he actually began to set it up. The baptism which He instituted was no idle, unmeaning form, nor did it signify simply a profession of repentance, but it initiated and founded a new community. Those who received it professed not only repentance as necessary to prepare them for the Kingdom of the Messiah, now expected to appear shortly, but a readiness to believe in and obey Him whenever, in an evident way, He made Himself known. "The Law and the Prophets", says Christ, "were until John. Since that time [the good news of] the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it." The baptism of John and that of Jesus were essentially the same, one into a profession of belief in the Messiah yet to come, and the other into a possession of belief in the Messiah who had already come. Thus John's baptism began to do what his words began to predict, to separate the righteous from the wicked, to prepare the righteous for eternal life and leave the wicked to the consequences of their sins. He began to establish the Kingdom of God, whose initiatory rite was baptism, just as circumcision was the initiatory rite of God's ancient church. Thus the Kingdom of God came not with an observation by the eyes. While men were saying, lo here, and lo there, it happened that the Kingdom of God was in the midst of them.

But after all this knowledge of the nature of the Kingdom, or Christianity, which was possessed by John the Baptist, and after baptising Jesus with his own hands, and receiving the divine testimony of which he had been forewarned, so caught up was he with the Jewish

prejudices, of the temporal splendor and power of the Messiah, and so discouraged by his long imprisonment, that he sent two of his disciples to inquire whether He were actually the Messiah. Jesus sent them back to tell all they saw and heard, and to leave him to form his own judgement, adding what throws light on the reasons of John's doubts: "Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me", who does not consider the lowliness of My appearance incompatible with the loftiness of my pretensions"

This good and holy man, having lived just long enough to see the rising twilight of the new dispensation for which he was sent to prepare the way, fell a victim to the intrigues and revenge of a wicked woman. Herodias, the wife of one of the sons of Herod the Great, accompanying her husband to Rome, there became acquainted with Herod [Antipas], the tetrarch of [Galilee and] Perea. After her return to Judeah she abandoned her husband, and with her daughter Salome went to live with him in open defiance of the laws of God and Man. John, the intrepid prophet of righteousness, reprov'd such flagrant iniquity in high places, and said to the royal transgressor: "It is not lawful for you to have her." For this bold testimony for righteousness he was sent to the castle of Machærus, on the confines of Palestine and Arabia [that was built on a barren rock surrounded by deep valleys]. But the sleepless revenge of Herodias followed him even there, and he died, as is well known, as a martyr to the truth. Thus perished John the Baptist, the morning star of Christianity, and his dying eyes caught scarcely a glimpse of the glory that was revealed.

Note: Herodias' mother Bernice was the daughter of Antipas' sister Salome. Rumors went that Bernice had an incestuous relation with her brother. Herodias, therefore, ought to have had a low esteem of marriage. Herodias was first married to Antipas' half-brother Philip.

There is no subject that the literature approaches with such diffidence as the personal character and history of Christ. There is no theme on which language is found so inadequate and imperfect. I confess that my speech falters and my vocabulary seems meagre and inadequate to describe a person in human form with every attribute of humanity, except sin, exhibiting perfect goodness in combination with infallible wisdom, clothed with extensive power over the physical nature and a knowledge of futurity at once extensive and circumstantial. He is the declared end and object of a train of miraculous interpositions running back to the very foundation of the world, Himself being the beginning and cause of a new order of things, embracing the whole world and all succeeding times. Yeah, his doctrines are destined to sway the minds of the millions of the human race, to form their opinions, to mould their characters, to shape their expectations, to reign in their minds and judge their actions, to convict and purify their consciences, to cleanse them from sin and prepare them for his own society and the presence of God. To speak worthily of such a person on the spiritual plane is a task too difficult, whatever view we adopt of his metaphysical rank in the universe. From the fierce controversy



as to the nature of Christ, so early raised and which more than any other cause has disturbed its harmony, I am most happy to escape. That belongs to the history of opinions. Volumes on volumes would not contain their endless diversity. What men have thought of the figure of Jesus of Nazareth and what He actually was and did and taught and brought to pass, are two things entirely different. The former is a matter of mere speculation, the latter embraces all that is necessary.

Note: From the foregoing is evident that the writer did not want to speculate on the divinity of Christ. This was an important topic for the early church. The Council of Nicæa, in the year 325, dealt with it.

We read of Jesus that immediately after his baptism by John, with its transfiguration, He was directed by divine impulse to retire into solitude where He passed forty days in preparation, no doubt for the great work in which He was about to engage. From this solitary sojourn He returned filled with the Spirit, with that measure of wisdom and knowledge and power that was necessary for his mission to humankind. From that forty days' retirement He came back to the world with a scheme of religion entirely new. It differed from everything that had gone before, spiritually and universally. Its plan was perfect as from the very beginning. It was not to grow up and take such a form as circumstances might dictate. But it had an adaptability like that of the divine mind itself. It was to transform and mould all things according to its unalterable purpose. It is with reference to this fulness of knowledge by which He was exalted not only above all the prophets who went before Him, but all those whom He used as instruments in propagating and establishing his religion. It is therefore said of Him that "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him", and that "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ".

The divine plan being thus communicated to the mind of Christ, it was necessary that He should have the power of carrying it into effect. Having received this divine commission, it was necessary that it should be authenticated. The plan was divine, but such were the ignorance and blindness of humankind that it is not at all probable that the world would have recognized and embraced it as divine, had it not been authenticated by miracles. Humankind, particularly in rude ages, wants not only truth but authority, not only truth but the certainty that it is the truth. If not embraced with sufficient confidence it would have done them no good.

Jesus returned from his forty days' seclusion possessed of supernatural wisdom, which guarded Him from all mistakes and enabled Him in all circumstances to say and to do the things that his present condition required. He, for instance, came with miraculous knowledge of the manner and circumstances of his death, the success of his religion, and the spiritual power to which He was to be exalted. He came with supernatural control over the order of nature such as is

most striking to the unsophisticated understanding of men, in order to persuade them of the connection of its possessor with God. His touch healed the sick, his will changed the course of the elements, his command stilled the tempest, his voice raised the dead. But quite as striking to those with whom He associated, was that He could read men's most secret thoughts and tell the transactions of their past life and foresee what they were hereafter to do.

But the system, though perfect in itself, existed nowhere but in his own mind. How was it to be introduced? The human mind was not a blank slate on which might be written the institutions and principles of the new religion. It was already preoccupied. What was already there could not be annihilated or effaced. How could the new be made to supersede the old? It could not be done at once. It could only be done by degrees, by engrafting the new upon the old where it was practicable, and by infusing into the current flow of language and thought new principles which, imperceptible, would color the whole mass, thus superseding rather than destroying what existed. The Jewish religion was extant, as the stock upon which to engraft his own. He himself was expected, but in another character from what was generally assumed. The whole phraseology was already in use, which surreptitiously designated what He was to do. What would the highest wisdom have dictated Him to do? What does someone do when he wants to build a house, but has an old one already on the spot? Does he begin by giving it to the flames, or by throwing it all aside? No! He selects from it whatever is sound and incorporates it within the new building.

This was precisely what Jesus did with regard to the Jewish religion. He used the expectations and phraseology, then in existence, as to the Messiah and the new dispensation. To reject them would have made the task of introducing the new religion much more difficult. The only course, which wisdom could direct, was to adopt the existing phraseology and give it such a sense as would correspond with his real character and office. The Jews were accustomed to call the Messiah the Son of Man, a term from the vision of Daniel (7:13-14), in which the prophet saw "someone like the Son of Man", invested with great power and dignity. He was likewise called the Son of God, as mentioned in the second Psalm. These appellations He assumed, and by assuming them He claimed all that belonged to [the current view of] the Messiah. The Messiah was expected to be a king, and the new dispensation a kingdom. This, however, was not literally a fact, but spiritually true in a sense that transcended the most exalted conceptions of the most bigoted and ambitious Jews. Nor ought it to militate against their view of things, that it might seem to be inconsistent with perfect candor and dealing. No language at his disposal would have given them a clear conception of Christianity, as it came to be. Their own phraseology of a kingdom would come as near as any that He could adopt. What it was going to be, time only could tell. We, who know what it is, acquiesce in the propriety of his

use of the messianic language, as it then existed, giving it at the same time such an interpretation that it became the symbolic expression of the highest spiritual truth.

Note: The writer fails to understand, so it seems, that the 'old religion' foreshadowed the 'new religion', which is precisely the religion God always had in mind as was foretold by prophets like David and Daniel. That those were misunderstood by Jesus' contemporaries is another matter. In their arrogance, the scribes refused to listen to Jesus, who said of Himself: "I am the way, the truth and the life". Of course, it is correct that new wine should not be put in old wineskins (Mt. 9:17), and yet, in no way, this contradicts the old religious observance.

To exemplify the principles laid down here, to show the wisdom, the miraculous knowledge of Jesus, the full understanding that He had of the whole system right from the beginning, and the manner in which He insinuated the glorious and eternal truths of Christianity through the messianic phraseology of that time, I shall proceed to analyze some of his first discourses.

The ministry of Jesus began in Galilee, but at what time of the year we are not informed. Of his first tour through that country, during which He attended the marriage-feast at Cana, we have only a general idea. Of his discourses during that tour nothing remains but their commencing sentence: "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." Multitudes soon gathered around Him, and his fame spread throughout all Syria [Syria extended to the north-east from the Sea of Galilee]. His first recorded discourse is that which He held with Nicodemus at Jerusalem, at the first Passover which occurred after the commencement of his ministry.

This conversation introduces us to one of the most interesting scenes of the New Testament. It presents us with practical proof of that miraculous wisdom with which Christ was endowed, which made Him equally at home with the learned, acute and experienced members of the Jewish Senate at Jerusalem as well as the humble, simple peasants and fishermen of Galilee. "And it came to pass when He was in Jerusalem, at the Passover on the feastday, that many believed on his name when they saw the miracles He did." "Marvel not that I said to you that you must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Spiritual birth, true religion, is not confined, as you Jews suppose, to one tribe or family. It is as free as the air and the Kingdom of God, which you expect to be a national affair. It will spread over the earth as that does, without any regard to the boundaries of nations and kindreds. Its empire is the soul, everywhere free. Everyone is capable of receiving it, not more in those whose material bodies have descended from Abraham than in those who have never heard of his name. If you really desire, then, to enter the Kingdom of God, to be my disciple, come not here by night, go openly and be baptized (Jesus

did not say during his public life that people should be baptized). Be a Christian (my follower), not outwardly alone, but inwardly. Hear my teachings, receive my spirit, and trust no more in your descent from Abraham. In the course of the conversation, He glances at two other facets no less offensive to the Jewish prejudices of Nicodemus: the Crucifixion of the Messiah and the extension of his Kingdom to the Gentiles. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." For "God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world", not to destroy the nations as you Jews suppose, "but that the world through Him might be saved". Such was the transcendent wisdom of the Saviour from the very commencement of his mission. Before the wisdom of this youthful teacher, learning and age and experience were overborne and subdued, and Nicodemus must have retired convinced – no less by his discourses than by his miracles – that He was a teacher come from God. Soon after this conversation Jesus returned into Galilee, and, passing through Samaria, held that remarkable conversation with the woman of Samaria at the well of Jacob, which I have commented on in a former letter.

On his arrival at Nazareth, his previous residence, He attempted to preach in the synagogue where He had been accustomed to worship. The people listened to the first part of his discourse with pleasure and admiration, though, according to a strong propensity of human nature, they were disposed to sneer at Him as the son of a carpenter. At the first hint, however, of the teaching that the new dispensation was not to be a national religion, but to be extended to Gentile as well as Jew, they became violently enraged. They might have been led to suspect that He was not altogether sound in the national faith of a Messiah, who was to destroy the heathens, from his manner of quoting that striking passage of Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bound, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Here He stopped. The rest of the sentence is: "...and the day of vengeance of our God". Had He quoted the rest of the sentence without explanation, as applicable to Himself, they would have understood Him to sanction their expectation that He was to destroy and not to save the other nations of the earth, and would have perhaps cried out: 'Hosanna to the son of David!' But not only did He pass over this most important part of their messianic traditions, so comforting to them under their present political oppression, but He went on to intimate that the heathens were not only to be spared, but to be admitted into the Kingdom of the Messiah. "I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias (...) but to none of them was Elias sent except to Sarepta, a city of Sidon, to a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the days of Eliseus the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." This was

too much. A Messiah who could tolerate or look favorably upon the heathens was not to be endured. "And all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city, and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went his way and came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath."

The fame of his miracles and his teachings went on to increase till the synagogues appeared too small to contain the crowds who knocked to hear Him. He began, therefore, to teach them in the open air. Once He preached from a ship while they stood on the shore, and once from a higher ground that his voice might be better heard by so vast a multitude. His speech, on this occasion, is called after the place where it was delivered: the 'Sermon on the Mount'.

Let us examine its contents, and mark the wonderful wisdom it displays, couching eternal truths in language precisely adapted to the circumstances of the time, so that the Jew, when he heard it, was cured of his errors; and the Christian of all times [who takes note of the sermon] finds himself edified as if it had been addressed to him alone. In that vast multitude, which was assembled from all parts of Judeah, there were probably men of all the different sentiments, entertained by the Jewish people of that period. They united in but one common sentiment, that the Messiah should be a temporal deliverer, should cleanse Jerusalem and the Holy Land of the Roman standards perched on every tower, and redeem the people of God from the degrading yearly tribute they were compelled to pay. They were ready to take up arms in the holy cause of patriotism and religion. They wanted but the signal of his hand to take up their line of march to the city of David. There, they supposed, He himself, whose sword had drank most freely of the blood of the slain, would stand highest in the new monarchy. They collected about Him with hearts bursting with national pride and ambition. What must have been their astonishment and disappointment when the first sentence fell from his lips: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." The Kingdom of God, which you have been so long expecting, is not an empire of war and conquest, nor does it belong to the Jews as an empire that will be reigning over foreign nations. It belongs to the humble, the quiet, the contented! It does not come as a cure for outward misfortunes, for political evils, for the relief of proud hearts rankling under oppression, but it speaks comfort to those who are bowed down under the sorrows of life: "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." You expect the Messiah to vindicate the weak against the strong, to repel injury, to revenge insult, that He will set up his empire with the sword and defend it by the sword. "But I say unto you, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." The gentle are those who are to flourish in the days of the Messiah. They shall delight themselves in the

abundance of peace. You come to Me expecting a sign from Heaven, to be fed with manna from the skies as your fathers were in the desert. I can promise you nothing of the kind. The blessings of my Kingdom belong to those only who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be heard. You expect under the Messiah a reign of bitterness and vengeance, that He will rule with a rod of iron and dash his enemies in pieces like a potter's vessel. But I come to pronounce blessings on the merciful, for I assure them that they shall find mercy from their eternal judge. You, who observe the laws of Moses, submit to innumerable ceremonial ablutions, and therefore imagine yourselves pure and prepared for the Kingdom of God, I assure you that no such purification will be of any avail in that kingdom. In effect: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The remedies which you propose for mortal ills are essentially defective. You imagine that they can be cured by violence and resentment, that evil may be remedied by evil, instead of being overcome by good. But I say unto you: "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God." They shall share in the blessings of the new dispensation, not those who are vindictive and resentful. By contrast, I say unto you: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake."

The new religion, which Jesus was sent to teach, was not only to be preached by Himself to that generation, but was to be perpetuated forevermore. His own ministry, He knew, was to be short, and to have a tragical end. It could be perpetuated in no other way than by choosing assistants while He lived, and training them to take up the work where He laid it down, to receive the gospel from his lips, proclaim it to the world, and when their days were numbered commit it to others, who should be prepared in their turn to instruct a new generation, and thus send it down to all future generations. Had there been no organisation of this kind, had Jesus chosen no apostles, Christianity would have perished on the very threshold of its existence. Accordingly, not long after the commencement of his mission, after a night of prayer to God, doubtless for divine guidance and direction, He choose twelve men from his close followers and ordained them as his assistants and successors in the propagation of the new faith. To them He explained more fully the principles of his religion, which to the multitude, for fear of popular commotion, He veiled under the dress of parable and allegory. He sent them during his own ministry as heralds of his approach, to prepare the minds of the people by their own instructions for his more perfect teaching.

Note: The foregoing neglects the 'work' of the Holy Spirit, without which the growth of the new Church would have been unthinkable, work that by great miracles, during Christ's life and thereafter, received the required evidential power. These miracles were not an accessory, but essential! It was not just a new philosophy, for which the Greeks were famous; it was given life by the finger of God. Without those miracles that were quite out of the ordinary (most notably the resurrection of the already corpse-stinking Lazarus), the Highpriests would not

have been at fault for rejecting Jesus as the promised Messiah, and the Jewish people would have been blameless for not embracing the new faith that was to be known as the Christian religion, which, like a new seedling, shot up vigorously through the tough uncooperative earth.

The twelve apostles were men from the lower strata of society, of but slender literary and intellectual cultivation, without wealth or influential connections. They brought no accession of strength or respectability to this cause. It speaks for itself that for such a lofty cause the disciples lacked any skills. That He made such a selection would seem utterly unaccountable on any principle of human policy. Quite as unaccountable is that He himself preferred to pass through his ministry under an exterior so exceedingly humble. In the language of the apostles "He made Himself of no reputation", and to all appearances "He assumed the form of a slave." But upon reflection we find that it was dictated by the highest wisdom. His apparent humility only accentuated his moral and spiritual glory. He was really so great that nothing external could add to the grandeur of his character. Without availing Himself of a single distinct advantage, He told his followers from the onset that they were to reap no worldly reward for their connection with Him. At the same time they were called to establish a religion that was to disappoint the hopes of their own nation and offered no concession whatsoever to the aspirations held high by ambitious men. When we think of it, the success [in spreading the gospel] can only be explained because Jesus' mission really came from God and was carried by the moral power that always accompanies the truth. Additionally, his miraculous deeds [during his sejour on earth] strongly impressed the unsophisticated minds and demonstrated that verily He had been on a mission for the Most High.

It may at first sight seem strange that He should have made such a choice, especially if we consider that He might have gone up to Jerusalem and chosen his disciples from the most learned, gifted, and accomplished of the rabbinical schools that were then flourishing. Over them He would have manifested the same immeasurable superiority, and might have wielded them to accomplish his purposes as easily as those humbler persons whom he actually choose as his companions. Between Him and the intellectual and cultivated there would seem to have been a closer sympathy than with those uneducated Galileans who, as far as we can now see, were mere children in his presence. But this arrangement, like any other, was founded on the highest wisdom. The position, which they were meant to fill, did not call either for great talents or extensive learning. They were to create nothing, they were to add nothing to what He had taught. Their office was simply that of witnesses of what He had said and done and suffered. "And you also shall bear witness", said He to his disciples, "because you have been with Me from the beginning."

After his resurrection He said to them: "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his

name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. (...) You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem and Judeah, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” This being the office of the disciples, intellectual cultivation was not a necessary requisite. The qualities most necessary to a witness are simplicity, integrity, and courage. Through them the world had received the gospel. The more transparent the medium through which we receive it, the less coloring it takes from the minds through which it was transmitted. The consequence is that we have the most simple and childlike narrative that the world has ever read. We do not see the historians at all. All we see is Jesus Christ, his doctrine, his character, his life, his miracles. There is no attempt to fuse with the philosophy or opinions of the times, with the exception of the beginning of the Gospel of John. It is unnecessary to say that those lines have created more controversy in the Christian Church than all the rest of the letters. What Jesus wanted of his apostles was principally to be his witnesses to the world, then and to all succeeding ages. On their testimony, in fact, the faith of the successive millions of the Christian Church has depended. The Gospels are nothing more nor less than their testimony. Jesus himself left nothing written. All we know, either of Him or his teachings, we have received through them. Without their testimony we would not know that such a person had ever existed. Without their testimony we would not know what He taught or how He lived. It was on the strength of what they had seen and heard that they claimed to be the religious teachers of the world.

The relation, which the apostles understood themselves to sustain to Jesus as witnesses, is fully and clearly brought out in Peter’s exposition to Cornelius and his friends: “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all the things He did both in the Jewish country and in Jerusalem, whom they slew and hanged on a tree. (...) Him God raised up the third day and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead.”

When the Saviour bowed his head upon the cross, and said: “It is finished!”, the gospel was complete. He had discharged his office as a teacher. Nothing could be added to it, and nothing could be taken from it. The system was perfect. The duty of the apostles was to promulgate it to the world. So you will observe that the promise of divine assistance, as far as the teachings are concerned, goes no further than strengthening their memories. “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, the Father will send in my name. He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.” They were occasionally instructed what to do, but never, that we read of, to preach any new doctrine which had not been taught by Christ himself.



It may seem strange to those, who are used to dispute about words and phrases, that Christ should have left nothing written, nothing to be identified as the very words He spoke. The stickler for creeds and formulas may lament that all the disputes of after ages were not anticipated and could have been prevented by a written declaration of the Saviour himself – in such a plain language that no dullness could have misapprehended, no ingenuity perverted it. We are fully justified, I believe, in asserting that no such precaution would have worked. Human language is essentially ambiguous, every word having a variety of meanings, any one of which becomes probable only because it better suits the context, the purpose, or the sentiments of the writer. Language is always addressed to reasonable beings, and it is imperative to exercise reason in order to comprehend. It is so too with Christ's plainest instructions. We are always obliged to use our reasonable faculties in order to decide in what sense his words are to be taken. Take for instance when He tells us: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yeah, and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple." Are we then to interpret this literally and say that no man can be a Christian without hating father and mother and sisters and brothers? By no means. And why? Because it is not reasonable to assume that this was its intended meaning. We cannot suppose that Christ wanted his followers to prove false to the most important relations we sustain in this life. We conclude, therefore, that He did not use the word 'hate' in a literal, but a figurative sense of loving them less than himself and his cause. So we interpret the precept that commands us to cut off our right hand, or pluck out our right eye. We do not cut off our hands and pluck out our eyes, not because we are not literally commanded to do so, but because common sense teaches us that He did not want it to be taken literally. So whatever Christ might have left written, the same difficulty of interpretation would remain. We should still be obliged to evaluate the probabilities of an interpretation, just as we do now. We cannot be infallibly certain that we take a sentence of Scripture in the true sense without possessing inspiration ourselves. We cannot know that we are inspired without the power of miracles, or unless some miracle were wrought for our sakes, for otherwise we could not distinguish between those thoughts that were miraculously suggested from those which occur in the ordinary operations of our minds.

Then, even had the Saviour left the Gospel written with his own hand, we would still have been compelled to rely on human testimony that the same identical words were preserved. The thing, then, is evidently better as it is. We would have been compelled at last to rely on human testimony as to what Christ did and taught and suffered. What more competent witnesses could we possibly have than those who were with Him on terms of the greatest familiarity during his whole ministry? In what better form could we have this testimony than in the Gospel according to Matthew, written by one of those who were with Him from the beginning, and who was present at his

Crucifixion, who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead, and who spent his life in propagating his religion? What more unobjectionable testimony than that of John, who had been one of the disciples of John the Baptist (John 1:35), who saw the transfiguration, leaned on his bosom, and shared his most intimate friendship? As collateral proof, what more authentic than the memoirs of Luke and Mark, who were the constant companions of the apostles, and heard them rehearse over and over the wonderful story of the teachings and miracles of Jesus?

Considered in this light, as human testimony, and it is the only light in which they can be regarded, those who understand the principles of evidence most thoroughly tell us that their evidence is the more weighty and satisfactory from their slight variations from each other. Those who frequent courts of justice tell us that it is utterly vain to expect entire consistency of a number of witnesses, let them be ever so honest and ever so competent. Agreement in the main facts is all that is expected, and nothing will sooner cause suspicion of collusion than for two witnesses to make, word for word, the same statement. No human being ever told the same story twice in the same words and in the same order.

Nothing can be more evident than that the narratives were subjected to the same common laws which govern the operations of the human mind. We have in the records three different narratives of Paul's vision and conversion, twice by himself in public speeches, and one from the narrative of Luke, who probably heard it from his own lips in private conversation. Yet, the three accounts all vary from each other in words and circumstances. The four evangelists all give us the inscription upon the cross of Jesus, yet no two agree in the precise form of words which was used. Matthew says that the accusation was: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Mark says that the superscription was: "The King of the Jews." Luke says it was: "This is the King of the Jews." John says that the title on his cross was: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Here, then, is a variation in the testimony. It is impossible that more than one of these inscriptions can be verbally accurate. But it creates no distrust, and not one in a hundred of the Christian church has been aware of its existence. It is an immaterial variation, a discrepancy which must always be allowed in human testimony, and nothing could be more unreasonable or absurd than to allow the least shade of doubt to pass over the mind as to the reality of the inscription because of this verbal discrepancy. The first three evangelists have given us Christ's prayer in his agony at the garden of Gethsemane, but each of them in different words. Yet no man in his sober senses would think of doubting the actual occurrence of that thrilling scene on that account. If anything in all history of the past can be said to bear the native impress of truth, it is this whole transaction!

Ad finem

# PART II

## When was Christ Born?

§ 01 – The Luke legend	p. 231
§ 02 – The system of census taking	p. 232
§ 03 – Not one, but two governors	p. 233
§ 04 – The meaning of auctoritas / hegemonia	p. 234
§ 05 – The period of the governorship of Pilate	p. 235
§ 06 – The Flavian legend	p. 237
§ 07 – Conclusion	p. 238
Appendix-2 : The Census of Quirinius, by Philip Schaff	p. 240
Appendix-3 : Jesus' Birth brought Peace to the World	p. 243
Appendix-4 : The First Persecutions of Christians	p. 244
— Answers to a reader's reply	p. 246

## The Three Liturgical Calendars of Israel

§ 08 – The liturgical calendar in Jesus' time is not known	p. 252
§ 09 – The most important changes	p. 253

## Early Censorship to Discredit Christian literature

§ 10 – Left no trace? Unthinkable!	p. 255
§ 11 – The official records	p. 255
§ 12 – Keep it quiet...	p. 255
§ 13 – The Testimonium Flavianum	p. 256
§ 14 – Why differently?	p. 257
§ 15 – Despite Jewish censorship	p. 258
§ 16 – Further research called for	p. 260

## The Messianic Expectation as Motivation for the Crucifixion of Christ

§ 17 – A God of Vengeance	p. 261
§ 18 – The Expectation of the Jews	p. 262
§ 19 – God loves all men	p. 265
§ 20 – The voice of one crying in the wilderness	p. 266
§ 21 – A peace-loving Jesus, that was unacceptable !!	p. 268
§ 22 – The liberation theology from those days	p. 269
§ 23 – Dragged from oblivion	p. 270
§ 24 – Jesus considered a revolutionary	p. 273

§ 25 – Until the Messiah Prince...	p. 274
§ 26 – Everything was outright provocation	p. 276
§ 27 – Guilty of death	p. 279
§ 28 – The righteousness and pardon of God	p. 279
§ 29 – The Talmud gives insufficient insight into Jesus' times	p. 281
§ 30 – The day of revenge	p. 282
§ 31 – Terrorism, even today	p. 284
<b>Behold, the Lord comes with Fierce Anger (Bible quotes)</b>	p. 286
<b>Appendix-5 : Why Jesus entered Jerusalem on an Ass's Foal</b>	p. 287
<b>Appendix-6 : The Canonicity of the Book of Daniel</b>	p. 288
 <b>Appendix-7 : Justice and Peace</b>	
§ 32 – Introduction	p. 288
§ 33 – Our cultural heritage has been trapped	p. 289
§ 34 – Justice and Peace: a twin concept amongst three	p. 289
§ 35 – Conclusion	p. 290

## **PART III**

### **pages 294-340**

#### **ARTICLES ON QUESTIONS OF CHRONOLOGY**

- **The Sun Miracle**
- **Sukkoth and the Equinox**
- **Chanukah, its origin and place**
- **The Panin Bible Statistics (PBS)**
- **How long did the Israelites stay in Egypt?**

# *When was Christ Born?*



## *1 – The Luke legend*

At present there is a regrettable tendency to doubt the historical nature of the Christmas story as described in Luke 2:1-3: *“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.”* Since the eighties, the official Lectionaria of the Roman Catholic Church has translated it incorrectly: *“...before Quirinius was in charge of Syria”*. This passage is known as the ‘Luke legend’, according to a reasoning which runs as follows: Christ came from Nazareth and was born there; yet, in order to prove that Jesus was the Messiah sent by God, He had to be born in Bethlehem, according to the prophecy of Micha, repeated in Matthew 2:6: *“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah, for out of you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”* It is this same prophecy that is referred to when the three Magi go to Herod to ask where to find the newborn King and Saviour of the world. If we may speak of a Luke legend then this too must be characterised as a legend, even though it might be seen as a charming episode that everyone likes to be reminded of. If we are inclined to be indulgent, then we have to assume that Luke made a mistake, but this is strictly unacceptable because Luke is a first-rate historian. Elsewhere his account excels in its exactness and eye for detail, whereby he places in the foreground that which is important for the account, either leaving out what does not concern the matter in hand or passing quickly over it. For this reason I dare to suggest that the Biblical account conforms to the truth and that everything happened exactly as Luke recorded. In order to put matters right, Sir William Ramsay rephrased the problem of “When was Christ born” into “Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?”, the title also of his book.

## ***2 – The system of census taking***

The first related facts were confirmed by a discovery, in 1897, of thousands of papyri in Egypt, uncovered on an ancient garbage dump, in a place known as Oxyrhynchus, the modern Bahnasa. Sir William Ramsay, professor at the University of Oxford and a relation of the Nobel laureate of the same name, published studies of the papyri in 1915. Ramsay was the first to demonstrate that a regular and universal census system existed in the Roman Empire, a mechanism revealed by the ancient Oxyrhynchus Papyri from Egypt (discussed by him). These papyri, which were still being researched when he wrote his book, confirmed Luke's census statements right down to the last detail. They revealed that at this period of history a great census was taken every fourteen years, a term that agrees with the age at which children were deemed to become adults, i.e. liable to pay taxes. This practice corresponds exactly to Ramsay's observations made some time earlier. He pinpointed universal enrolments in the years 8 BC, 6-9 AD, 34 AD, 48 AD, 62 AD and 76 AD; so he only missed that taken in 20 AD. The Census of 8 BC happened to be the first universal census in the history of the world, proceeding from smaller censuses held at irregular intervals and here and there, which up till then had been usual but provided insufficient information for the Roman authorities. The authorities are always hungry for more!

Luke mentions that when Jesus was born Cæsar Augustus held a census in the days of Quirinius. A whole year was kept open for the census and people might present themselves at their place of origin for registration at any time during that year, but the later months of the year were most frequently used. The Great Census of 8 BC corresponds with the infamous oath of loyalty people had to make to both Herod and Augustus. Six thousand Pharisees refused to comply for religious reasons and narrowly escaped a horrible punishment. The dispute was finally settled with a fine, which is known to have taken place in the year after the completion of the census. We may infer that this was the census, or taxing, mentioned by Luke. According to Ramsay, the system and principles established by Augustus, inspired by the old Ptolemaic system of an annual census in Egypt, were maintained and developed by later emperors on the lines that he sketched. Regular census-taking lasted for more than 250 years before it stopped in a disorganised and weakening Europe; Augustus knew that the efficient government and control of large groups of people depended on the collection, classification, and registration of details; the bureaucratic system he devised to meet that end fixed the general type for all modern methods of public administration.

### ***An important precedent in the Ethiopian calendar!***

After having determined the date of birth of our Lord and Saviour, I discovered a remarkable fact: that the Ethiopian calendar departs from the premise that Jesus was born in 8 BC! In ancient times this was determined by the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. Their calendar is 7 to 8 years behind the Gregorian one based on assumptions about the date of the annunciation of Jesus' birth.

## ***3 – Not one, but two governors***

No modern historian I know of arrives at the date of birth of Jesus in 8 BC because we learn from Josephus that from 8 to 6 BC Sentius Saturninus – and not Quirinius – was governor of Syria. If we are to take Luke seriously that seems an impossibility. Seems... because he mentions Quirinius as a governor or 'hegemon', which is not a specific term and could mean any commanding position or position of authority. Remarkably, Tertullian, the earliest of the great Latin Church Fathers, states in "Adversus Marcionem" (4:19) that Jesus was born when enrollments were held under Augustus by Sentius Satur-



ninus in Judeah. The great church historian, Philip Schaff,<sup>5)</sup> refers to it as “*the confident statement of Tertullian, which he must have derived from some good source*”. That was in 1882, but in today’s world it is generally assumed that Tertullian is mistaken. But how could he, knowing the Gospel of Luke and believing in it, who mentions Querinius? Luke does not say that he is ‘the hegemon’ but ‘hegemon’, indicating ‘a’ governor, which leaves open the possibility of Quirinius not being the only one. It is well established, according to Ramsay, that in various other cases two Legatis Augusti could exercise their duties in the same province at the same time. Ramsay suggests that both Publius Sulpicius Quirinius and Gnaeus Sentius Saturninus (the elder) were governors in Syria at the same time with different duties. Ramsay says that if Quirinius commanded the legions and military resources of Syria, while Saturninus looked after the delicate and complicated political relations in Syria and Palestine, both would have had enough to do. He explains that for an extraordinary large and complicated undertaking like the Census, the imperial civil service was quite ineffective; government was carried on with a very small staff that was hardly capable of coping with the ordinary duties of government, and so the Census had to be largely carried out as a branch of military duty – set up on behalf of the political authority, i.e. Saturninus in Syria and Herod in Palestine. Querinius, in his function of Commissioner overseeing the imperial operation throughout a part of the realm – the equivalent of a United Nations High Commissioner – could at the same time hold his former function of governor of Syria under whatever title that might have been. That Quirinius had two tenures of office is also supported by an old monumental inscription discovered between the Villa Hadriani and the Via Tiburtina, referred to by Philip Schaff, who starts his analysis of the Census as follows:

«« It has been proven almost to a demonstration by Bergmann, Mommsen, and especially by the specialist in inscriptions A.W. Zumpt, that Quirinius was ‘twice’ governor of Syria. (And further) ...that Zumpt assumes that Sentius Saturninus, who was sent as governor to Syria in 9 BC, and remained there till 6 BC, began a census in Judeah with a view to substitute a head tax in money for the former customary tribute in produce. »» (See Appendix-2 hereafter)

Whatever the case, as High Commissioner his Roman title could very well have been Legatus Augusti. Actually, he is called the “Roman Commissioner” in the seventh School of Hillel letter. Someone in that function certainly was involved ‘in situ’ when the crisis erupted in Palestine with the six thousand who refused to take the oath of allegiance.<sup>6)</sup> In 2012 a dictionary appeared about the persons mentioned in the Gospels according to the visions of Maria Valtorta (1897-1961).<sup>7)</sup> This is an important work of reference, in which Valtorta is said to call Quirinius the “*Imperial Envoy*”, while

---

5) See Appendix-2, hereafter. Philip Schaff (1819-1893) was a Swiss-born, German-educated theologian and a historian of the Christian church, who, after his education, lived and taught in the United States. He became a professor at Union Theological Seminary, New York City in 1870 holding first the chair of theological encyclopedia and Christian symbolism till 1873, of Hebrew and the cognate languages till 1874, of sacred literature till 1887, and finally of church history, till his death. His literary work embraced the writing or editing of some 80 publications.

6) The Evangelist Luke does not state that Quirinius himself implemented the census in one region or another. Certainly he would not have implemented it in Palestine that was governed by Herod, which interlinear implies some supervising role. “The Expectation of the Jews” from the ArchkoVolume, names him at the second census “the Roman Commissioner”, which suits the purpose. In note 2 Vol. 2, of the book “Was Christ born at Bethlehem?”, Ramsay comments: “The theory has also been advanced that Quirinius was one of a number of commissioners, appointed by Augustus to hold the enrollment throughout the Roman world. (...) In this capacity, also, Quirinius would be a delegate exercising the Emperor’s authority, Legatus Augusti. (...) This theory is possible; it offends against no principle of Roman procedure or of language. It may be the truth.”

Sentius Saturninus is characterized as “*the Governor*” of Palestine. This agrees with the foregoing. There is, however, more substantial evidence. In chapter 11 of his book “Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?” Ramsay writes:

«« In 1764 there was found in the residential area of the ancient well-to-do Roman citizens, near Tibur (Tivoli), a fragment of marble with part of an inscription, which is now (1905) preserved in the Lateran Museum of Christian Antiquities as one of the important monuments bearing on the history of Christianity. The inscription records the career and glorious military exploits of a Roman official who lived in the reign of Augustus, and survived that Emperor. He conquered a nation; he was rewarded with two Supplicationes and the Ornamenta Triumphalia, that is the gorgeous dress of a triumphing general, with ivory sceptre and chariot, etc.; he governed Asia as proconsul; and he TWICE governed Syria as legatus of the divine Augustus. Though the name has perished, yet these indications are sufficient to show with practical certainty, that the officer who achieved this splendid career was Publius Sulpicius Quirinius. His government of Syria from 6 to 9 AD was therefore his second tenure of that office. »» (I am still looking for a photograph of this marble fragment, but have not succeeded yet. It was probably dumped in the cellar of the museum if not worse.)<sup>8)</sup>

When, in 6 AD, Quirinius returned to administer Syria, this would naturally lead to the expression in his epitaph “*legatus of Syria again*” (*legatus iterum Syriae*). And thus every circumstance narrated by Luke has been proven to be completely logical and probable. As corroborative evidence, Ramsay mentions the example of a milestone found in Africa. Rutilius Gallicus was sent there, probably in 75 AD, to hold a census. At the same time the ordinary commander of the African army held office. On the milestone both are mentioned, followed by the joint title ‘*legatus Augusti*’. The milestones were placed at regular intervals under the authority of the governor of the province. In this case both the plenipotentiary and the extra-plenipotentiary legates are mentioned as authorising the supervision of the road and the placing of the milestone.<sup>9)</sup> In the Roman Empire, more-headed authority was normal, for example, two consuls or two aedils (sort of mayor of Rome), and this is generally admitted nowadays. Still, scholars refuse to accept that Quirinius could have held office together with Sentius, because then they would have to revise certain erroneous views as concerns the Biblical chronology.

#### **4 – The meaning of *auctoritas* / hegemonia**

Having solved so many problems, Ramsay does not manage to solve the sticky problem of the commencement of the public life of Jesus, which creates a conflict in assigning the 8 BC year as the year of Jesus’ birth. This is because the advancement of the date of birth of Jesus also advances all the other events related to his life. So, it is expedient to

---

7) “Dictionnaire des Personnage de L’Évangile selon Maria Valtorta” by René Laurentin, François-Michel Debroise en Jean-François Lavère – Salvator, France # 2012.

8) Whatever does not suit their purpose they try to silence. It is for instance a shame that Philip Schaff is not on Wikipedia and that the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (1997) dares to call his “History of the Christian Church” (12 vols) “hortatory rather than scientific in tone”. Hortatory sounds better than hysterical, isn’t it?

9) A similar case of the splitting up of functions occurred in the Netherlands. Between 1952 and 1956 Joseph Luns was minister ‘without portfolio’. At the time, the Minister of Foreign Affairs with portfolio was Willem Beyen, a socialist, while Luns represented the Catholic People’s Party. The only relevant decision taken during the formation of the (coalition) cabinet was that Luns would not be subordinate to Beyen and that he could call himself Minister of Foreign Affairs when abroad. The press release about the new cabinet said that a “shared responsibility” was the aim and matters would be dealt with under “as much shared responsibility as possible”.



look at its implications for the dates of his public life, episode about which we have Biblical facts. According to Luke 3:23 the beginning of Jesus' public life happened when he was about 30 years of age, and therefore this must have been in the year 23 AD. According to the Gospel of John, Jesus was crucified on the third Eastern of his public life, which consequently brings us to the year 26.

The mission of John the Baptist started, according to Luke 3:1, in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the authority of Tiberius when Pontius Pilate was prefect of Judeah. Hegemonia is the Greek word that is rendered as authority or charge. The term employed by Luke may be used for any Roman official holding a leading and authoritative position. (see Luke 2:3; 3:1, Acts 23:24, 26, 33; 24:1,10) In today's common practice the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the authority of Tiberius is counted as from the year of death of Emperor Augustus, in the year 14 AD. This year happens to coincide with an eclipse and can thus be established with certainty. From that time on, as from September the 17<sup>th</sup>, his successor Tiberius was fully in charge, first carrying the title of Princeps or 'first citizen', but not yet the title of Emperor. That had to be given by the Senate, some time later. According to our point of departure (Christ born in 8 BC and crucified in 26 AD), Tiberius 15, as year of the apparition of John the Baptist, would fall in 28 or 29 AD, thus after the Crucifixion, which is impossible. This fits only if Tiberius 15 is counted as from 4 AD, the year in which, during the regnum of Augustus, he was adopted as his son and designated as his successor, approach that accords with the Roman use of the word hegemonia. And why not, because ten years after Luke wrote his report, the reign of Titus was counted from the day he was designated to succeed his father Vespasian (which is normal encyclopedic knowledge), and that follows the same principle. As David Shotter writes, "*the deliberations by the Senate upon Tiberius' succession [after the death of Augustus] were a confirmation of the powers he had already been exercising over the previous decade under the umbrella of the 'auctoritas' of Augustus*".

Auctoritas is a very specific Roman expression that refers to the ability to evoke universal respect and to patronize on a large scale without running the risk of being challenged. Shotter writes: "*Of course, an acclamation in his own right was of great significance to Tiberius and his own auctoritas, for only to have exercised such powers under the responsibility of Augustus was a very different matter.*" Once his auctoritas had been reestablished, it is reasonable to assume that Tiberius' reign was counted from the day he started to exercise powers in the year 4 AD. This calculation advances the mission of John to 19 AD. In this way the pioneer John had four good years to prepare the people for the advent of Jesus, which appears a far better option than the miserable few months John would have under the present way of counting (in which Jesus' preaching began around 28-29 AD). That alone is an important argument capable of casting doubt on the now prevailing opinion. For how could John have gathered together such a large number of disciples, as stated in the Bible, in such a short time, disciples who remained faithful to him even after being thrown in prison? <sup>10)</sup>

## ***5 – The period of the governorship of Pilate***

In chapter 3, Luke first states that John the Baptist started his mission under the reign of Pontius Pilate. The accepted wisdom is that Pilate was appointed prefect of Judeah in the year 26 AD and was kept in office until 36 AD, which accords with the death of Christ in 29 or 30 AD and with his birth in the range of 4 to 6 BC (8 BC would be too far out), an approach which rests on the observations that Herod died in 4 BC and that Jesus was about 30 years of age when He started his mission. The assumed period of the governorship of Pilate follows from a statement of the church historian Eusebius (ca 263 – ca 339), who refers to Flavius Josephus in "The History of the Church" (9:1): "*In Antiquities the same writer informs us that in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius, who had mounted the imperial throne after the 57<sup>th</sup> year reign of Augustus, Judeah was entrusted to Pontius*

*Pilate, and that Pilate remained there 10 years, almost till Tiberius' death.*" Tiberius having died early in 37 AD, the statement can only be interpreted in one way: Pilate reigned from 26 to 36 AD. Eusebius made the same mistake as all the other historians in starting Tiberius' years after the death of his predecessor Augustus. According to my proposition this should be calculated after his appointment as successor to Augustus in 4 AD, which brings the beginning of Pilate's tenure to 16 AD and the end of it in the year of Jesus' Crucifixion.

That Pilate was called back to Rome immediately after the Crucifixion follows the tradition of the so-called *Paradosis Pilati*, discovered together with a number of Syriac manuscripts from the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century – which, however, I cannot accept as a genuine eye-witness account. The legends in this work led the Abyssinian Copts to honour Pilate as a saint (feast June 25<sup>th</sup>). Yet being wrong in some aspects does not prove being wrong in all aspects. Therefore I now quote the relevant passage, which I believe to be correct, because if all things have happened as told in the Gospels – as we reasonably believe to have happened – then this must have had repercussions for the main players in these acts: *"Cæsar being filled with anger because of the transgression of Pilate, the darkness and the earthquake that had happened all over the world, sent soldiers and commanded that Pilate should be brought as a prisoner [to Rome]."*

If we accept that Pilate's term as governor started in 16 AD, this will bring the tenure of office of his four predecessors to equal terms of three years as from 4 AD, which certainly belongs to the range of possibilities. Thus, his last predecessor Vallerius Gratus ruled from 13 to 16 AD and not from 15 to 26 AD as is actually taken for granted. How to fill in the gap between 26 and 36 AD of the supposed succession of Pilate, remains obscure. Perhaps the vacancy was not filled until Tiberius was succeeded by Emperor Galicula at the beginning of 37 AD. There were no major disturbances in Judeah in the decade after the Crucifixion; thus there was no urgent need to fill the vacancy. Maybe, by means of a very exceptional measure, Tiberius wanted to decide personally on all matters of importance in Judeah after he had heard of the frightening details of the transgression of Pilate. I am not too much concerned about these divergences from the accepted view of the historical reality because, as Ramsay points out correctly, the latter part of the reign of Augustus, actually the whole period from about 15 BC up to and including the reign of Tiberius, is shrouded in uncertainty and had to be reconstructed from bits and pieces. No contemporary historian illuminates it. Suetonius and Valleys hardly

---

10) If we carefully read the revelations of Blessed A.K. Emmerick together with "Maria Puerta del Cielo" (by Consuelo), it is clear that the mission of John was twofold. The first was in the 'desert of Judeah'. I quote: « « Now, Judeah has become a desert to him and like previously, when surrounded by springs, rocks, trees and all the animals, when he lived and conversed with them, he likewise talks and acts with the people and sinners without consideration of himself. (...) Always convinced of his mission, conscious of his responsibility, serious, severe, simple and enthusiastic, he only proclaims one thing: repentance! Prepare yourselves! Salvation is at hand, the Saviour is coming! » »

The second part of his mission, starting just about the time that Jesus was to be baptised, takes place in all the region around the Jordan, where he preaches and applies a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Precisely this interpretation of the meaning of 'desert' is what was meant when Isaiah announced the voice of one crying in the desert. (Is. 40:1-5, Lk. 3:4-6)

In ancient Israel, a man was not ready to preach until he was thirty years of age. Only then he was considered to have sufficient maturity and could have the respect of older men. An itinerant preacher would be laughed at and ridiculed if younger. This also fits Numbers 4:35. Yet, John the Baptist was younger when he started on his mission. His mother died very early and he went to live in the desert to escape being murdered on order of King Herod. He was cared for by angels. (Source A.K. Emmerick) When he started his mission, he seemed to come out of nowhere. Nobody knew his true age and so he could not be prevented to preach on account of his age.

mention anything in it except some dynastic matters. There was nothing else, from their point of view, worthy of mention; there reigned an almost unbroken peace except for some frontier wars, and the bureaucratic system of Augustus worked, on the whole, so efficiently that there was nothing striking to record except the German war and the tragic defeat of Varus. See Appendix-3: “Jesus’ Birth brought Peace to the World”.

## **6 – The Flavian legend**

Still, there remains a delicate problem. Flavius Josephus tells in the part referred to by Eusebius (Ant. 18, 4 & 6) that Pilate was recalled before Easter to Rome for the slaughter of the Samaritans; and that – shortly afterwards – the expedition against the Nabateans in the region of Trans-Jordan was launched, which, however, was prevented by the news of Tiberius’ death early in 37. Antiquities tells how Pilate destroyed many Jewish Samaritans; that afterwards he was accused of doing so by a Samaritan delegation that went to Vitellius the Elder. Vitellius had become the governor of Syria in the year 35 and wielded much influence over Tiberius, reason why they approached him. Vitellius, Josephus continues, ordered Pilate to go to Rome to answer before the Emperor to those accusations. And it mentions that *“Pilate, when he had reigned ten years in Judeah, made preparations to go to Rome, and this in obedience to the orders of Vitellius, which he did not dare contradict. Yet, before he could get to Rome Tiberius was dead.”* Not having appeared before the Emperor, there could not be an account of it in Rome, which was convenient for the perpetuation of the lie. Based on Antiquities it is assumed that Pilate was disposed of his functions by Vitellius while Tiberius was still alive. This cannot be because Pilate was ‘Amicus Cæcaris’ and had to be disposed by the Emperor himself, and certainly not without having had the opportunity of a hearing. Having massacred men “*carrying arms*”, out of fear of a resurrection, was in those days not a terrible thing in the supervision of that troublesome nation, and did not justify a retribution. Nevertheless, it is possible that Pilate not only had to explain about the Crucifixion when in 26 AD he appeared before the Emperor, thus during the 10<sup>th</sup> year of his tenure, but also about the slaughter of the Samaritans, which might have happened in 25 AD. I take for granted that the slaughter happened, as such a thing must have been engraved in the public mind and could not be fantasized, except with some liberty on the date. Nowadays we have an obsession with dates, but that was not the case in Roman times.

### ***To obliterate the seed of promise***

The ninth regal authority in the Davidic succession was the queen-regent Athaliah, that wicked woman, daughter of the devilish Jezebel. She proceeded to exterminate the royal household of Judah, but unknown to her the crown prince and little infant Joash was hidden for six years in the Temple. At an opportune time he was shown in the open and anointed king. Although Athaliah was not Davidic in line of blood, she had the full adoptive status of a Davidic descendent because of her marriage to king Jehoram (in Jewish custom the bride is fully adopted). Her reign of terror (856-851) counts therefore in the order of the Davidic succession to the throne. (2 Kings 11 and 2 Chron. 22-23) I tell this as another example of an effort – and very dangerous one! – to obliterate the ‘seed of promise’.

We are now confronted with the ‘Flavian legend’ instead of the ‘Luke legend’. Flavius Josephus’ “Jewish War” was written between 75 and 79 and his “Antiquities” 25 years later, when the number of Pilate’s contemporaries could be counted on the fingers of one hand and a new round of the Roman persecution of Christians had started afresh. A little lie, in an otherwise impeccable record, was an insidious manner to denigrate the historical Christ. I do not think the postponement of the end of tenure of Pilate was introduced by later censors (in those times a great deal of changes were made in texts) but was put

there by Josephus himself. He was, in fact, a prominent Jew of royal Hasmonean descent and his background was that of a Pharisee. He would therefore have had little sympathy for this Jewish sect that called itself Christian. As Philip Schaff remarks: “*Josephus is not as impartial a historian as Luke, nor worthy of more credit.*” (Appendix-2)

I have noticed more than once that the Jewish scribes tell the truth but not ‘only the truth’ and not ‘the whole truth’. A little lie or omission, just a tiny little one, in some inconspicuous spot, might produce the desired result. In 1867 the Jewish scholar J. Dérenbourg published a book full of interesting facts covering the history of Palestine during the period from the return from Exile to the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, his research being based on the Talmudic writings and other rabbinic sources. In a small note he tells that Pontius Pilate was procurator in the years 18 to 37, which is stated as a matter of fact without any further explanation, although he must have known that Christian scholars believed that he was appointed in 26 AD. Apparently he did not want to correct that view, which touched a sensitive issue. This is an omission. We should know for sure that a man like Dérenbourg was no child in his field of expertise and when he said something he had always a good reason for it. I suggest that he had made the same discovery I did, based on his Jewish sources, namely that John the Baptist appeared 483 years after the return from exile. According to the contemporary calculations, based on a prophecy by Daniel, this fell in 19 AD. According to the same prophecy, Christ had to be crucified seven years later. Daniel’s prophecy is dealt with extensively in “The Messianic Expectation as Motivation for the Crucifixion of Christ”. Knowing that Pilate was procurator before John the Baptist started his mission, he subtracted one year to arrive at 18 AD. Not recognizing the falsification of history by his compatriot Flavius Josephus, he followed the reading of Antiquities, and so arrived at a tenure of office for Pilate in the period that stretched from 18 to 37 AD.

## 7 – Conclusion

All in all we can answer the question, as proposed by Ramsay: “Was Christ born in Bethlehem?” with a very definite YES. And if some professor or other decides that the Christmas story is the product of someone’s imagination, well... we know better!

---

## References

- **David Colin Arthur Shotton:** “Tiberius Cæsar” – Routledge, London # 1992.
  - **J. Dérenbourg:** “Essai sur l’Histoire et la Géographie de la Palestine (d’après les Thalmuds et les autres sources rabbiniques) Première Partie: Histoire de la Palestine depuis Cyrus jusqu’à Adrien” - Imprimerie impériale, Paris # 1867 (p. 90).
  - **Sir William Mitchell Ramsay:** “Was Christ born at Bethlehem? (a study on the credibility of St Luke)” - Hodder and Stoughton, London # 1905. And also “The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament (based on a series of lectures - 1913)” - Hodder and Stoughton, London • New York • Toronto # 1915.
-

See also in Part III: “The Sun Miracle”

It is remarkable that after no more than seventy years of Babylonian exile the cycle of Israel's feasts was changed, even as regards the liturgical significance of certain of the feasts. The Feast of Tabernacles with its joyous nature was placed after the Rite of Azazel (scapegoat) which it had previously preceded. And Yom Kippur replaced the Rite of Azazel. Originally, New Year's Day was observed for the inauguration of Temples and originally followed Tabernacles immediately, as it was still observed until some time after the period of Ezra and Nehemiah, the prophets of the period after the Babylonian exile. How exactly and why these changes were introduced is still insufficiently understood. Formerly, Israel had followed a solar year in which both equinoxes, at Easter and Tabernacles, played the essential part. After the Babylonian exile the Jewish nation gradually adopted the nineteen-year lunar-solar Babylonian cycle, a change encouraged perhaps by the conceptual confusion brought about in people's minds by the shift in the seasons that could have been caused by some catastrophic event, probably in the year 594 BC, as analytical research seems to point at. There must have been important reasons for these liturgical changes. A meaningful approach to the problem is to be found in the interpretation of the so-called Sun Miracle of Ahaz and the catastrophic events that took place ninety years later, in the year 594.

And its sequel: “Sukkoth and the Equinox”

This is a follow-up of the “The Sun Miracle” and goes more into the detail of the astronomical realities and calculations. The article discusses what could have happened with regard to the recession of the equinox, discussed in the light of the circumstances of the celebration of Sukkoth.

The new astronomical complexities after the catastrophic events in the year 594 BC will have caused a state of conceptual confusion. It could easily have taken several centuries before the intricacies were clearly understood and incorporated into the new festive cycle of Israel. Basically, the joyous feast of Sukkoth was no longer fit as an equinoctial event for a people that had to come to terms with the traumas of the recent past, which explains the radical innovation of Yom Kippur and the twelve-day shift of Sukkoth from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>, which nonetheless left behind a vestige consisting of the date for the dedication ceremony for temples and churches...

## APPENDIX 2

# The Census of Quirinius

From the “History of the Christian Church”  
by Philip Schaff (1882)

I now quote from the reputed “History of the Christian Church”, which bears on our subject, with some amendments [within brackets] by Hubert Luns:

«« It has been proven almost to a demonstration by Bergmann, Mommsen, and especially by the specialist in inscriptions A.W. Zumpt, that Quirinius was ‘twice’ governor of Syria – first from AUC 750 to 753 [Anno Urbis Conditæ, or: from the founding of the City of Rome], which means from 4 to 1 BC (when there happens to be a gap in our list of governors of Syria), and again, from AUC 760-765 (6-11 AD).

This double legation is based upon a passage of Tacitus in Annals 3:48. (126) Zumpt concludes that Cilicia – the native region of the apostle Paul – was the only province that could have been of Quirinius. And of course Syria was at this time attached to Cilicia. In Annals 3:48 Quirinius is described as the ‘rector’ or adviser to Caius Cæsar when holding Armenia. This cannot have been during Quirinius’ governorship of Syria during the second census, for Gaius Cæsar, the oldest son of Marcus Agrippa, died in 4 AD; the nearness of Syria to Armenia was probably a reason for choosing Quirinius, Syria’s governor, to be the young prince’s adviser. Tacitus records in the passage, already mentioned, that Emperor Tiberius asked for Quirinius the honor of a public funeral from the Senate. He represents him as unpopular because of his meanness and undue power in old age. Indeed, it was during his first governorship of Cilicia and Syria that he conquered the Homonadenses and obtained as a sign of appreciation the insignia of a triumph. [As Ramsay says in “Was Christ born in Bethlehem” - p. 92: “*He held office in Syria, and carried on war with the Homonadenses, a tribe in the inner mountainous district lying between Phrygia, Cilicia and Lycaonia: he gained in this war successes which were judged so important that two solemn acts of thanksgiving to the gods [supplicationes] in Rome were decreed, and the decorations of a triumphing general were awarded to him. The two ‘supplicationes’ were probably awarded for victories in two successive years.*”]

Quirinius’ tenure of office is also confirmed by an old monumental inscription discovered between the Villa Hadriani and the Via Tiburtina, first published at Florence in 1765, then by Sanclemente in 1793 (De vulg. ærae Emendat. Rom.), and more correctly by Bergmann and Mommsen in “De Inscriptione Latina, ad P. Sulpicium Quirinium Referenda” - Berol. # 1851. Mommsen discussed it again in an appendix to “Res gestæ Augusti” - Berol. # 1865 (pp. 111-126). The inscription is defective, and reads: “ (...) *Pro. Consul. Asiam. Provinciam. Op(tinuit legatus). Divi. Augusti(i)terum (thus*



*again, a second time) Syriam. Et. Ph(oenicem administravit) (or: obtinuit)."* The name is obliterated. Zumpt refers it to Sentius Saturninus, who preceded Quirinius, but he is not known to have been twice governor of Syria. Bergmann, Mommsen, and Merivale refer it to Quirinius, as was done by Sanclemente in 1793 and by Ideler in 1826. Nevertheless Mommsen denies any favorable bearing of the discovery on the solution of the difficulty in Luke, while Zumpt defends the substantial accuracy of the evangelist.

Hence [the event of] Luke in 2:2 might very properly be called the census about the time of Christ's birth – "*the first (enrollment)*" (πρώτη) under Quirinius – to distinguish it from a second and better known, which he himself mentions in his second treatise on the history of the origin of Christianity. (Acts 5:37) Perhaps the experience of Quirinius as the superintendent of the first census was the reason why he was sent to Syria a second time for the same purpose.

(...) Herod was only a tributary king (rex socius), who could exercise no act of sovereignty without authority from the Emperor. Judeah was subject to taxation from the time of Pompey, and it seems not to have ceased with the accession of Herod. Moreover, towards the end of his life he lost the favor of Augustus, who wrote him in anger that "*whereas of old he had used him as his friend, he would now use him as his subject.*" (131)

It cannot, indeed, be proven by direct testimony of Josephus or the Roman historians, that Augustus issued a decree for a universal census, embracing all the Provinces ("*that all the world*", or Roman world, "*should be taxed*" cf. Luke 2:1), but it is in itself by no means improbable, and was necessary to enable him to prepare his "*breviarium totius imperii*" [resumé of his all embracing emperorship]. [Tacitus records in Annals 1:11 that a 'breviarium' of the empire was ordered by Augustus, giving a return of its population and resources.] Such a decree has been often inferred from writings of Suetonius and the passage of Tacitus just mentioned.

The silence of Josephus is not very difficult to explain, for he does not profess to give a history of the empire, is nearly silent on the period from AUC 750-760, and is not as impartial a historian as Luke, nor worthy of more credit. Cassiodorus (Variarum 3:52) and Suidas (see πογγραφή) expressly assert the fact of a general census, and add several particulars not derived from Luke. For instance, Suidas says that Augustus elected twenty commissioners of high character and sent them to all parts of the empire to collect statistics of population as well as of property, and to return a portion to the national treasury. Hence Huschke, Wieseler, Zumpt, Plumptre, and McClellan accept their testimony as historically correct (while Schürer derives it simply from Luke, without being able to account for these particulars). Wieseler quotes also John Malala, the historian of Antioch, as saying, probably on earlier authorities, that "*Augustus, in the 39<sup>th</sup> year and 10<sup>th</sup> month of his reign issued a decree for a general registration throughout the empire.*" We may therefore conclude that Julius Cæsar had begun a registration of the whole empire, and Augustus completed it.

In the nature of the case, it would take several years to carry out such a decree, and its execution in the provinces would be modified according to

national customs. Zumpt assumes that Sentius Saturninus (133), who was sent as governor to Syria in AUC 746 (9 BC), and remained there till 749 (6 BC), began a census in Judeah with a view to substitute a head tax in money for the former customary tribute in produce; that his successor, Quintilius Varus (6-4 BC), continued it, and that Quirinius (4 BC) completed the census. This would explain the confident statement of Tertullian [160-220], which he must have derived from some good source, that enrollments were held under Augustus by Sentius Saturninus in Judeah. (134) Another, but less probable view is that Quirinius was sent to the East as special commissioner for the census during the administration of his predecessor. In either case Luke might call the census “*the first*” under Quirinius, considering that he finished the census for personal taxation or registration according to the Jewish custom of family registers, and that afterwards he alone executed the second census for the taxation of property according to the Roman fashion. The problem is not quite solved; but the establishment of the fact that Quirinius was prominently connected with the Roman government in the East about the time of the Nativity, is a considerable step towards the solution, and encourages the hope of a still better solution in future.

Zumpt, the classical scholar and archæologist, concludes (p. 223) that there is nothing in Luke’s account which does not receive, from modern research “*volle historische Wahrscheinlichkeit*” [full historical probability], while Emil Schürer, the theologian, still doubts. (Mt. 28:17) Dr. Woolsey decides that “*something is gained*”. (see under Cyrenius in Smith’s Bible Dictionary – Hackett & Abbot’s, p. 526) In the article “Taxing” he says that registration work of Judeah made under the direction of the president of Syria by Jewish officers would not greatly differ from a similar registration made by Herod, and need not have alarmed the Jews if carefully managed. »»

Taken from “History of the Christian Church - Volume I, Apostolic Christianity; 1-100 AD” by Philip Schaff # first published in 1882; 2002 Internet version, Copyright Christian Classics Ethereal Library, U.S.A.; carefully compared, corrected and emended by “The Electronic Bible Society”, Dallas, U.S.A. (Chapter: “Chronology of the Life of Christ” and section: “The Census of Quirinius”).

## Notes belonging to the “History of the Christian Church”

The notes 127, 132 and 135 have been included in the main body of text.

(126) Annals 3:48 was interpreted by A. W. Zumpt in a Latin dissertation: “De Syria Romanorum provincia ab Cæsare Augusto ad T. Vespasianum, in Comment. Epigraph.” - Berol. # 1854 (Vol. 2, pp. 88-125), and approved by Theodor Mommsen [with whom Zumpt was in frequent conflict] in the “Res gestæ divi Augusti” - Berol. # 1865 (pp. 121-124). Zumpt developed his views more fully in “Das Geburtsjahr Christi” - Leipzig # 1869 (pp. 1-90). Ussher, Sanclemente, Ideler (2:397), and Browne (p. 46) understood Tacitus in the same way.

(131) Josephus’ “Antiquities” 16:9:4. Compare to: “Römische Staatsverwaltung” by Joachim Marquardt (1:249).

(133) Not to be confounded with L. Volusius Saturninus, known from coins, who was governor of Syria in the year AUC 758 (4 AD).

(134) “Adversus Marcionum” 4:19: “*Sed et census constat actos sub Augusto tunc in Judæa per Sentium Saturninum, apud quos genus ejus inquirere potuissent.*”



### APPENDIX 3

## Jesus' Birth brought Peace to the World

The German War ended in 8 BC when 40,000 Su-Cimbren were pushed back to the opposite bank of the Rhine. On that day, in the year of Jesus' birth, it can be said that Cæsar Augustus brought peace to the Roman world. Indeed, Jewish tradition says: *"If a boy is born peace comes into the world."* Until the coming of Jesus the joyous birth of a firstborn son was therefore celebrated in Jewish practice with the 'Yeshua ha-Ben' or 'Jesus the Son' ceremony, also named the 'Shalom Zochor' or 'Peace to the Male Child', traditionally held on the first Friday night after the birth of the child. This ceremony still exists, but now under different names, like 'Vakhnacht', derived from the Dutch 'waak-nacht', meaning night watch or vigil. In the Baba Bathra 60b text 'yeshua ha-ben' is written without the final 'heh' after yeshua. The additional letter 'heh' would change the meaning into 'salvation' or 'redemption of the son'. The latter option appears to have been chosen by Rashi, which is mentioned in a footnote of the English Soncino translation of the Talmud. Without the 'heh' it seems permissible to translate it by 'Jesus'. However, as someone pointed out to me: *"It is difficult to understand what a ceremony called 'Jesus the Son' would mean to a rabbinic Jew."* Yet, as with Biblical texts, here too a variety of intended and unintended meanings are taken for granted. The full text of the Encyclopædia Judaica (1972) under the heading "Circumcision/Folklore", written by its Editorial Staff, is as follows:

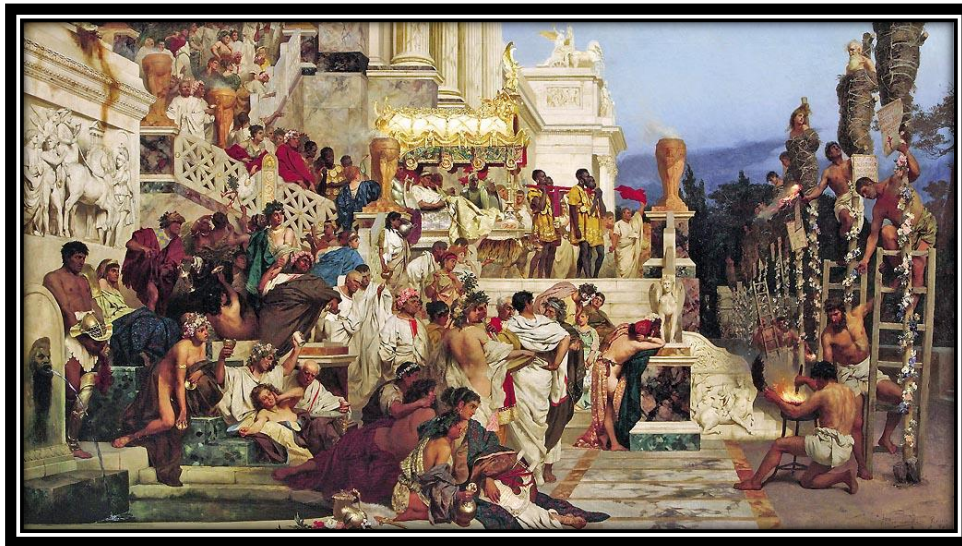
«« On the first Friday evening after the birth of a boy a ceremony called 'ben zakhor' or 'shalom zakhor' is held to express the joy at the birth of a boy, since *"as soon as a male comes into the world peace comes into the world."* (Nid. 31b) On this occasion the Shema is recited [Deut. 6:4: *"Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one!"*], as well as [the blessing of] Genesis 48:16 and various psalms and other prayers. (cf. Isserles to Sh. Ar., YD 265:12) In oriental communities this ceremony is called shasha or blada, and special prayers and portions of the aggadah are recited from a booklet called "Berit Olam" in honor of the prophet Elijah. It is customary to serve boiled chickpeas on this occasion.

Another home ceremony, called in Yiddish 'vakhnakht' (watchnight, vigil), was held on the night preceding circumcision. Candles were lit throughout the home, and following a festive meal, featuring cooked beans and peas, prayers were recited and the Torah was studied until after midnight. Before departing, the guests recited the Shema aloud at the bedside of the mother. This custom is mentioned as early as the Talmud by the name 'yeshu'a ha-ben' or 'shevu'a ha-ben' (week of the son). (Sanh. 32b; BK 80a) It probably evolved from the fact that when the mohel checked the infant's health on the eve of the circumcision, he was accompanied by the 'sandak' (godfather) and other friends who came to congratulate the parents. This custom later became associated with the belief that it is necessary to guard the child against Lilith and other evil spirits by guarding him throughout the night while reciting prayers and studying the Torah. This vigil, also very popular among Sephardi Jews, is called 'midrash' because of a discourse on the weekly Torah section delivered by the 'hakham'. The 'hazzan' also chants appropriate poems and the Kaddish. Poppy-seed, honey cake, and coffee are served at this ceremony. In Salonika, the eve of the circumcision was known as 'veula' (watchnight, from the Greek 'vigilia', or watch), and the mother stayed awake all night. In Yemen, on the eve of circumcision, care was taken not to leave the mother and child alone, and incense was burned inside the room to ward off the evil spirits.

In Persia and Kurdistan a ceremony known as 'Lel Ikd ill Yas' was celebrated during which the Chair of Elijah was consecrated and adorned with silver crowns and various plants. In Ashkenazi communities it was customary to place the 'mohel's' knife under the mother's pillow until the following morning. In some places the kabbalistic Book of Raziël was also left there. It was customary to donate the swaddle in which the child was wrapped at the circumcision to the synagogue; richly embroidered, it would be used as a band for the Torah Scroll. In Salonika the severed foreskin was buried in the cemetery. »»

## APPENDIX 4

## THE FIRST PERSECUTIONS OF CHRISTIANS



Things started to turn sour after Rome's great fire in July 64. The terrified population looked for a scapegoat and found one in Nero himself, absent at his coastal resort when the fire started. Nero himself immediately passed the blame on to "*a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians*", possibly because those Christians were most heavily concentrated in two swampy valley areas left untouched by the fire. Tacitus describes the horrid scenes in his *Annals* (15:44):

«« First those who confessed to being Christians were arrested. Then, on information obtained from them, hundreds were convicted, more for their anti-social beliefs than for fire-raising. In their deaths they were made a mockery. They were covered in the skins of wild animals, torn to death by dogs, crucified or set on fire – so that when darkness fell they burned like torches in the night. Nero opened up his own gardens for this spectacle and gave a show in the arena, where he mixed with the crowd, or stood dressed as a charioteer on a chariot. As a result, although they were guilty of being Christians and deserved death, people began to feel sorry for them. For they realized that they were being massacred not for the public good but to satisfy one man's mania. »»

According to tradition, Nero's arena – the "Circus Gaji et Neronis" – was on the spot of the present Vatican. Ferdinando Castagnoli's 1960 excavations have shown that it was just south of the present Saint Peter's Basilica. The great arena of Rome, the Circus Maximus, had been put out of use because of the fire, and so the only alternative available for the cruel diversion was Nero's arena. Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, writes in his *History of the Church* (2:25:4-7):

«« The Roman Tertullian is likewise a witness of this. He writes as follows: "*When after subduing all the east, Nero exercised his cruelty against all at Rome. We glory in having such a man the leader in our punishment. For whoever knows him can understand that nothing was condemned by him unless it was something of great excellence.*" Thus publicly announcing himself as the first among God's chief enemies, he was led on to the slaughter of the apostles. It is, therefore, recorded that Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified under Nero. This account of Peter and Paul is substantiated by the fact

that their names are preserved in the cemeteries of that place even to the present day. It is confirmed likewise by Caius, a member of the Church, who arose under Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome. He, in a published disputation with Proclus, the leader of the Phrygian heresy, speaks as follows concerning the places where the sacred corpses of the aforesaid apostles are laid: *“But I can show the trophies [monuments] of the apostles. For if you go to the Vatican or to the Ostian way, you will find the trophies of those who laid the foundations of this church [building].”* (The heads of Paul and Peter have always been kept in the reliquary of the Basilica of St. John Lateran.) »»

The “Annuario Pontificio” gives the year of Peter’s death as 64 or 67, but it happens to be 64 in the aftermath of the great fire, and that was also the period when Peter wrote his second letter, as known from the New Testament, while imprisoned and aware of the fact that he faced a cruel martyrdom. Margherita Guarducci led the final stages (1963-1968) of the research that led to the discovery of the bones, lying directly beneath the Basilica’s high altar, which she attributed to St Peter. She advances a compelling argument that he died on October 13, three months after the fire. This date accords with Nero’s regnal day anniversary (*dies imperii*), an important one then, exactly ten years after he acceded to the throne. It was ‘as usual’ accompanied by much bloodshed. (“Saint Pierre Retrouvé” by Margherita Guarducci - Editions Saint Paul, Paris # 1974).

It is clear amongst scholars of various disciplines that, even admitting that Peter’s remains are those found under the St. Peter’s Basilica, he was not buried on the Vatican Hill immediately after his crucifixion. There may have been successive displacements of his bones or parts of them. The visionary Maria Valtorta writes that Peter’s remains were twice moved to avoid their desecration, and she points out where the three places are (and the St. Peter’s Basilica is not one of them); as of yet her instructions have not yet been thoroughly investigated. In view of this, it is not unreasonable to assume that the Trophy (or monument) of Gaius, found beneath the altar of the great Basilica, is there to remember the site of Peter’s execution, but it does not necessarily indicate where he is buried. Pope Paul VI ordered to write on the reliquary containing nine relics of the bones found in the Vatican caves the following Latin sentence: *“B[eati] Petri ap[ostoli] esse putantur”*, that is “are believed to be the bones of the blessed Apostle Peter”, which implies that there is no conclusive evidence. Remarkably, C14 and DNA tests have never been done to assess the bones’ historical period and appertenance to any of the Hebrew haplogroups. Maria Valtorta describes Peter’s first burial site, which, she writes, was not on Vatican Hill (later leveled for the construction of the basilica). Her explanations have allowed to locate Peter’s first burial site in a hypogeum (an underground chamber) discovered in 1864 but not yet fully explored, near the beginning of Via Nomentana in Rome. Anyhow, the question of Peter’s burial sites is not yet resolved.

On 25 July 1948, Valtorta writes: *“Are they [the Roman prelates] sure that he [St. Peter] is buried in the Vatican? Among pagans, in a filthy site, and at the mercy of pagans?”* And on 27th August 1948: *“And at fallen night the Christians removed the body from there and took it to the first Christian Cemetery which was the Ostrianum, where Peter had evangelized, in the first catacomb excavated in Rome to gather Christians, teach them, baptize them and officiate the other sacraments.”* On 1st August 1948, she adds: *“Remember that the Ostrianum was used for the martyrs.”* And on 7th August 1948: *“St. Peter evangelized at the Ostrianum and there he had his chair.”* In other words, Peter’s first burial site should be situated in the area of the Cemetery Ostrianum.

-----  
 --- Answer to a reader's reply ---  
 -----

To:           The Reverend Father etc.  
               [the cleric wishes to remain anonymous]

Re:           **"When was Christ Born?"**

23rd March 2003

*Reverend Father,*

It gave me a great deal of pleasure to receive your reaction to my article on the chronology of Jesus Christ - which is, in fact, a compressed version of a much longer account.

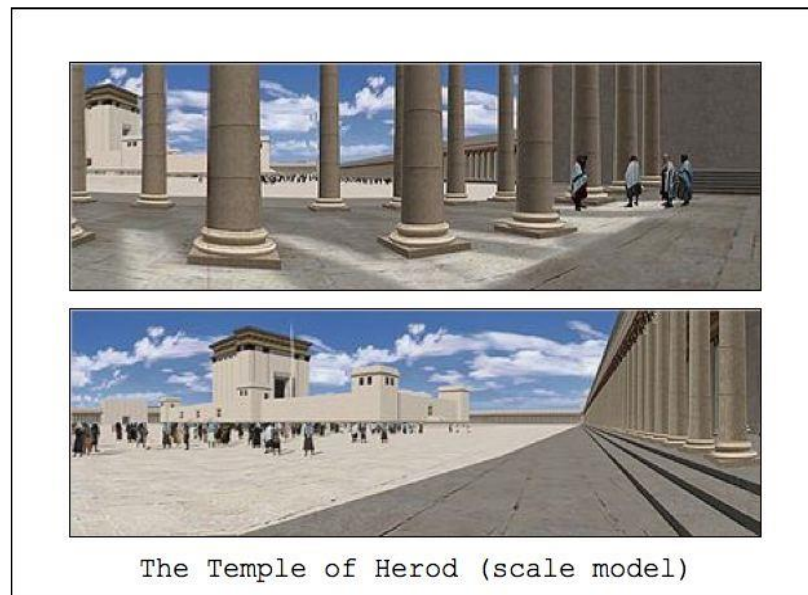
**8 - The year in which a start was made on the construction of the Temple**

To begin with your first remark on the start of Herod the Great's construction of the Temple, referring to Jn. 2:20 and Josephus' Antiquities 15:11:1, a simple solution is proposed.

In John 2:20 it is stated: "Then the Jews said: 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?'" And in Antiquities 15:11:1: "Now Herod, in the eighteenth year of his reign, and after the acts already mentioned, undertook a very great work, that is, to build of himself the temple of God."

Indeed, it is assumed and is also stated in all reference books, that Herod's rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem started in the year 19 BC (or in January 18 BC because of a delay in the start). This takes for granted the truth of the

assertion that Herod commenced the great project in the 18th year 'of his reign'. Though Herod was proclaimed King of Judeah by the Roman Senate in 40 BC, it was only three years later, in 37 BC, that he was able to take the city of Jerusalem with the aid of Roman troops. If 37 BC is taken as the year in which his reign started (cf. Wars 1:33:8), this implies that the construction works began in 19 or 18 BC. The remark contained in Jn. 2:20, that construction of the Temple had already been proceeding for 46 years, in that case situates the start of Jesus' public life in the year



26 or 27, which agrees with the chronology so far adopted by everyone. Should the case be otherwise - that the start of Herod's reign be situated at the time of being proclaimed King of Judeah by the Senate - the reconstruction works and the beginning of Jesus' public life are shifted three years earlier, which fits perfectly with the conclusion that Jesus' mission began in the year 23.

NB. The construction of Herod's temple was not completed until the year 64 AD - after hundred years work, to be destroyed again six years later, on Tisha B'Av, which was the decisive event of the First Jewish-Roman War.

### 9 - How long did Jesus' mission last?

The three Easters of Jesus' public life, that determine the duration of his mission, are reported in John 2:13, 6:4 and 12:1. Some commentators regard 'a feast', as reported in John 5:1, that this should also be noted as an Easter, but 'a feast' cannot be Easter since Ex. 23:14-19 commands that the Shalosh Regalim, the three major festivals should be held, namely Pesach (Easter), Shavuot (Pentecost) and Sukkoth (Tabernacles). According to the then prevalent Jewish way of thinking - and John the Evangelist was brought up in that thinking - Pesach would always be named a 'major feast', and thus 'a feast' cannot be Pesach.

### 10 - The hiatus in rule after Pilate was removed from office

The fact that I do not regard as problematic the hiatus in the governance of Palestine from 26 to 36 must, of course, be situated in the context of the literally world-shaking occurrence of Christ's Crucifixion, but I considered that this need no comment. It could well be that Tiberius moved to the island of Capri in 26 AD - far from Rome - because of that event. See the accounts of Tertullian and Paulus Orosius (p. 259), describing the circumstances that might have caused Tiberius to leave, for the Senate reacted hostilely to his proposal to elevate Christ as a god in the Roman pantheon. Not a single historian has been able to offer a sensible explanation for this extraordinary move and for the strange sort of manner of governing from the island, that Tiberius would continue to his death.

In the hope that these explanations answer your questions, I remain,

*Yours in Christ,*



Hubert Luns

-----

--- Answer to a reader's reply ---

-----

To:           The Reverend Father etc.  
              [the cleric wishes to remain anonymous]

Re:           **"When was Christ Born?"**

23rd April 2003

*Reverend Father,*

My thanks for your letter of 13th April including your newsletter of last March.

**11 - The 'auctoritas' question**

The arguments you mention, advanced by Father Lagrange, are well known. First, as regards the presumed vagueness of the 'auctoritas' of Tiberius - in the Biblical Greek it says 'hegemonia', a translation of the Latin term. Rather than "in the so many-th year that Tiberius was Caesar" the text states "in the so many-th year of Tiberius' auctoritas. It is therefore not a question of the word "Caesar" and the regalia belonging to that office but of the meaning of 'auctoritas', which covers the time before being Emperor. In Lagrange's interpretation we must take account of the fact that he assumes, like other scientists trained in theology, that Pilate's governorship lasted from 26 to 36 inclusive, this assumption being based on the writings of Josephus. Those who accept this latter then work backwards to Christ's chronology. In such a case it cannot be otherwise than that Tiberius' 'auctoritas' is a vague term. My approach is precisely the reverse: assuming (and why not?) the truthfulness of Luke's remark about the census at the time of Christ's birth (that of 8 BC), I do not work backwards but forwards in time. Simple comme bonjour!

David Shotter, quoted in my article, arises so much interest because he has absolutely no interest in the Biblical data and definitely none at all in Jesus (historically speaking). This makes him unprejudiced. Moreover he is an authority in this material. He devotes several pages to the term 'auctoritas', which turns out in his analysis to be a very specific Roman term. As he says, Tiberius' auctoritas 'naturally' became totally different when he became Emperor; which is the reason why, on the occasion of his being named Princeps (in the run-up to his nomination as Emperor) there was a wide-ranging discussion in the Senate regarding his auctoritas, a discussion that was of major importance for Tiberius. His feelings of insecurity on this point were clear when he began to stammer, something he always did when he felt unsure of himself. In view of the fact that ten years after Luke wrote his account, exactly the same system was used for Titus, which I also applied in the case of Tiberius (counting the years from his appointment as the successor), Lagrange's further arguments turn out to be irrelevant: it is obvious that a person appointed as successor may not yet strike his own coins, since that belongs to the emperor's prerogatives. Take note that I did not obtain my information on Titus' auctoritas from Shotter but from an ordinary encyclopaedia, so that it can be assumed accepted knowledge.

## **12 - At what age did Jesus begin his mission?**

Indeed, Jesus started his mission when he was around 30 years old. This could, according to the letter, be advanced to 32 years. But there are some arguments in favour of having Jesus start his mission immediately after reaching the age of 30, since then his mission added to that of John comes to seven years, as follows from my method of counting. My article on the messianic expectations as a motive for Christ's Crucifixion can be regarded as a defence of the seven-years-period. As a matter of fact, it's very significant that immediately after the Crucifixion the



scriptural scholars started to discredit the Book of Daniel, as elucidated in: "The Canonicity of the Book of Daniel".

As a second argument in support of Jesus starting his mission at the age of 30 is the fact that Tiberius must still have been in Rome at the time of the discussion in the Senate regarding his proposal to place Jesus in the pantheon. The Crucifixion, therefore, cannot have taken place after 26 AD. Another remarkable thing is that the Slavonic version of Flavius Josephus gives a calculation - based on the building of the Temple and therefore also the prophecy of Daniel - that ends up with the date of 26 AD (for this, see: "The Messianic Expectations as Motive for the Crucifixion of Christ", section 26).

It fits well in Biblical symbolism that the Jewish-Roman war started in the year 66, the same year that the Judeo-Christians moved to Pella in Trans-Jordan. This signalled the end of the time of mercy, a period spanning forty years, and with it the break became final between the Christians who came from Jewry and their Jewish brethren. In Biblical parlance, the number forty symbolizes a period of testing.

### **13 - John the Baptist needed time**

According to the usual chronology, there is still a great unexplained problem. Have you never wondered why John the Baptist, the Messiah's precursor, had only a few months' time to prepare the coming of Christ - a totally inadequate period? And yet he was able to collect together his own crowd of followers... That alone is an important pointer that the currently accepted chronology is wrong.

*Yours in Christ,*



Hubert Luns

# The Three Liturgical Calenders of Israel

## The Implications for Finding the Year of Birth of our Saviour



*The Jewish festive calendar that is part of the ordinances, which is the third section of the Sinaitic covenant, went through a prolonged series of adaptations after the Jewish people had returned from the Babylonian exile (beginning 5th century BC). It is impossible to trace back all those adaptations and track their evolution through the ages, although a number of things can be known.*

*Dr. Julian Morgenstern (1881-1976) did pioneering work in that respect. He was one of the world's great Bible scholars from the last century. From 1921 until his retirement in '47 he was president of Hebrew Union College in the U.S. (a so-called reform institute, and thus liberal). He made it part of his life's work to investigate the intricacies of the different calendars of Israel. In the course of his work he discovered much, but there still exists large uncharted territory. This is what the article is about, being covered in a nutshell.*

### 8 – The Liturgical Calendar in Jesus' time is Unknown

There are many people, even well educated, who think that the calendars of Israel and the counting of days, as are currently in use, have always been that way; in any case did not change much. How could the Biblical prescriptions have been tampered with!? In general, people assume that in Jesus' days the liturgical calendar was roughly the same as it is known today. But even that is not true. Each attempt – and there have been many – to calculate backwards the date of crucifixion of Christ, based on the present Jewish counting of days, are bound to fail. There has even been a scholarly work that tries to reconstruct a day to day account of Jesus' public life! I want to stress that the only trustworthy method to arrive at the dates of his birth and death has to come from Roman history. On that premise, the undersigned has made an I might say a successful attempt

to discover the year of Jesus' birth, building on the sublime achievements of the great Scottish scholar Sir William Ramsay (1851-1939),<sup>11)</sup> but that is not on the table now.

The usual astronomical calculations to arrive at the year of birth of Christ are of no avail. Johannes Keppler (1571-1630) tried to find the year of birth on the assumption that the Star of Bethlehem was an astronomical event. Of course, there was a Star of Bethlehem, but it could not have been astronomical. How could a star indicate the exact spot of a cradle! What it was, remains open to speculation, but we do know that it looked like a star.

Julian Morgenstern published seven studies on this subject in the period between 1924 and 1953, covering 617 pages.<sup>12)</sup> That was in the HUCA (Hebrew Union College Annual). These annual reports had scientific value. All HUCA publications can be consulted for free on JSTOR's website. Specialized libraries have a reprint of these publications. In this light it remains puzzling why so few people are aware of these things. This will have to do with the fact that the Talmud hardly mentions the calendar changes in order to avoid confusion, but also with the fact that no one has yet understood why it was thought that those changes were necessary at the time.<sup>13)</sup>

Calendar I is also called the Canaanitic calendar, because the names of the months (not their liturgical aspects) are Canaanitic. Calendar II came into use in about 600 before Christ when they changed those names by numbers. Calendar III is the calendar that gradually took shape after the Babylonian captivity, and much later names were again introduced for the different months, this time Babylonian. Though Calendar II probably underwent more changes than only numbers instead of names, we will in this article concentrate on Calendar III.

## ***9 – The most Important Changes***

After the captivity that, according to the prophecy of Daniel, finished 483 years before the birth of the Messiah, the so-called Great Synagogue came into existence. The Men of the Great Synagogue, at certain times numbering more than a hundred members, instituted through ordinances the takkanot, the new festive calendar of Israel and its related institutions and customs, which had to be accepted by the people as a natural development and therefore could result only from a slow and gradual process. For the sake of simplicity and to reinforce the argument, all changes were attributed to Ezra the scribe, while it can be assumed that in reality his successors were also involved. This is illustrated by a number of specific alterations in the Sacred Text, which from motives of reverence, are sometimes called the corrections of Ezra, although they can be traced back to

---

11) Sir William Mitchell Ramsay: "Was Christ born at Bethlehem? (a study on the credibility of St Luke)" - Hodder and Stoughton, London # 1905. As well as "The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament (based on a series of lectures - 1913)" - Hodder and Stoughton, London • New York • Toronto # 1915.

12) Julian Morgenstern's contributions for HUCA on the calendars of Israel are as follows: "The Three Calendars of Ancient Israel" (1924 & 1926); "The Gates of Righteousness - about the transferral of New Year's Day from the tenth to the first of the seventh month" (1929); "Supplementary Studies in the Calendars of Ancient Israel" (1935); "The Chanukkah festival and the Calendar of Ancient Israel" (1947 & 1948); "Two Prophecies from the fourth century B.C. and the evolution of Yom Kippur" (1952-53). See also: "Two Ancient Israelite Agricultural Festivals" in *Jewish Quarterly Review* (new series) 8 (1917) pp. 31-54.

13) In "Articles on Questions of Chronology" of "Proofs of the Life and Death of Jesus", it is discussed that because of catastrophic events, meted out as a divine retribution, there was a slight tilting of the axis of the earth, which caused a recession of the equinoxes by nine days, and this in turn called for an adjustment of the religious calendar.

the Hellenistic period. What happened in detail is impossible to determine because in general the events in Judeah under the Persian rule are shrouded in darkness. The Great Synagogue, forerunner of the Sanhedrin, was no permanent body with regular sessions, and perpetuated itself until the occupation of Judeah in 332 BC by Alexander the Great.

Let us review the most striking changes. After no more than seventy years of Babylonian exile the Feast of Tabernacles with its joyous nature was placed after the Rite of Azazel (scapegoat), which it had previously preceded as it was still observed until some time after the period of Ezra and Nehemiah, the prophets of the period after the Babylonian exile. And Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement, replaced the Rite of Azazel with a ceremony that is clearly very much different. Yom Kippur later merged with the day named in Lev. 23:24 and Num. 29:1, known in the Bible as Yom Teruah, which means the day of the blowing (of the Shofar trumpet). Teruah was a simple ceremony that may have marked the difference between the lunar and solar year, the one being about eleven days shorter than the other. The changes in the calendar concurrently went, as appears to be the case, with a few changes in the books of Moses.<sup>14)</sup>

Under Calendars I and II Israel followed a solar year in which both equinoxes, those of Eastern and Sukkoth – when day and night are of equal length – played a central part. Calendar III, however, was based on the 19-year Babylonian lunar-solar cycle; the equinox was of no importance any more. Synodic lunar and the solar time are in agreement almost every 19 years: that is, the moon will be in the same phase on the calendar day every 19 years. However, the Jewish method does not produce a repetition of dates within any significant length of time: they more or less repeat after 247 years (13 x 19). The Jewish liturgical calendar only became final, so it seems, in about the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

As concerns those changes, it is of interest that the term Rosh Ha-Shana (head of the year) was not applied until at least the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. It was not only the Babylonian captivity that threw a spanner in the works. Following the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, causing the practice of animal sacrifice to be stopped, the synagogue liturgy was enlarged, new traditions were suggested, and emphases were shifted in an attempt to keep alive the religious practice of a people scattered outside their homeland and tragically stripped of their Temple, which latter is the only place where animal sacrifice is permitted. It was at this stage that the New Year shifted to the New Moon of the first day of the seventh month (Tishri). In the pre-exilic time this day was situated on the equinox of 10 Tishri, but as said, this is of no consequence any more.

• • •

---

14) I would like to call your attention to Exodus 23:16 and 34:22, stating: “the Feast of Ingathering [Sukkoth or Tabernacles] at the end of the year [therefore before the equinox]”, and also Deuteronomy 31:10: “‘at the end’ of a Sabbath year [7-year period], at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles [therefore before the equinox]”. Now compare this with Leviticus 23:34: “the 15<sup>th</sup> of this 7<sup>th</sup> month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles [therefore after the equinox]” and also Numbers 29:12: “on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month you shall have a holy convocation [therefore after the equinox]”. The subsequent verses in Numbers 29 make clear that this holy convocation is the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles. The inconsistencies of these texts, at the same time before and after the equinox, cannot possibly have been an integral part of Moses’ books.

# Early Censorship to Discredit the Literary Tradition of Christianity

*As noticed, there is not a single element in the secular and early historical writings that confirms the narrative facts of the Gospels, something that applies even more forcefully to the very sensational occurrence of the Crucifixion. We hardly need to emphasise that the historical aspect of the Crucifixion is of major importance to the believer. And therefore we need to find an answer to the question why the secular and contemporary writings 'seem' to be silent on the Crucifixion of Jesus.*

## 10 – Left no trace? Unthinkable!

The Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth was accompanied by a deep and terrifying midday darkness for several hours, and there were severe earthquakes for miles around, followed by reports of his resurrection and the beginning of a religious movement that spread like fire on dry grass. It was inevitable that literary traces were left behind in the courts, historiography and political discussions. Nevertheless, the recorded history at the time seems to be silent about this.

## 11 – The official records

The earliest known reference is of Tacitus who in his *Historiæ* (5:9), when reviewing the history of Judeah between 14 and 37, the period thus when Jesus was crucified, then remarks: “*under Tiberius all was quiet*”. Tacitus was born about thirty years after the Crucifixion, and started writing much later. So he had to rely on official documents. Could these events have been forgotten so quickly? I think it was more likely that Tacitus was preoccupied with grandiose events: large-scale wars, dynastic struggles and important rebellions. The Crucifixion does not fall in any of these categories. In his *Annals* (15:44:2-3) he mentions Rome’s great fire in July 64 for which Nero blamed the Christians. In the same passage he tells that “*Christ the founder of the name had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the Procurator Pontius Pilate.*” This was written, according to Crossan, in the year 115 and therefore is not contemporary. So he had not forgotten; it was simply that – if we read carefully – the Crucifixion itself was not to be regarded as a significant trouble as concerns the political aspect of history. The movement as it existed many years later, yes. In Nero’s time Tacitus calls it “*a pernicious superstition*” (*Annals* 15:44).

Flavius Josephus, a few years younger than Tacitus, shows the same lack of interest in Jesus’ Crucifixion when he deals with Pontius Pilate in his *Jewish War*. (2:169-177) He notes only a few popular disturbances brought on by Pilate’s misgovernment. Nothing at all is said about Jesus. However, in *Jewish Antiquities*, written later, when he recounts the disturbances of the same period (18:55-89), he makes some cursory remarks about Jesus’ execution, which is commonly identified as the *Testimonium Flavianum*, but this testimony is not without problems.

## 12 – Keep it quiet...

We know the Jews had a vested interest in having the events related to Jesus’ life eradicated from the records, and they had the means to do it. I now quote from Reverend



Mahan's introduction to "The ArchkoVolume",<sup>15)</sup> trusting the statement to be more or less correct as concerns the general view, although the details might be wrong. The conclusion at the end is also my view:

«« The great French teacher Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, who lived in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, better known under the acronym Rashi, says in Volume III (p. 190) that in the organisation of the ancient libraries there were men appointed called 'baalie suphoths', which means book compilers. Their business was to take the sheets of parchment of the various authors and pin their dates together, bind them in bundles and have them bound with clasps between cedar boards. This was a trade, and it required the best of scholars. All the sophers, or scribes, were Pharisees; they were the doctors, lawyers, orators, poets, and statesmen of their time. The Hillel (the Elder) and Shammai schools produced more scholars than the rest of the world in the final days of the Jewish Commonwealth. Almost every nation under the sun patronised these schools. Now, one of those baalie suphoths was Pseudonymaus Joseph Ben Gorion who in 150 compiled the works of the philosopher Philo of Alexandria, a contemporary of Jesus. This Ben Gorion was a Jewish rabbi, a Pharisee doctor. The writings of the historian Flavius Josephus, who was born in the fourth decade of our Christian era, were compiled by Ekaba, another Jewish doctor, at the close of the second century; and so happened in like fashion with all the historians who lived near the beginning of our Christian era. Josephus was published in book form by Havercamp in Amsterdam in 1729. All he had to guide him was what Ekaba had told and done. So it was with Philo, which was put in book form by [Thomas] Mangey in London in 1742; all he had was what Ben Gorion had pleased to compile of his works, and, as there was deadly hatred between the Jews and Christians in those early centuries, it is most reasonable to surmise that those compilers would leave everything out that would favour the Christians. It was in their own interest at the time to bury the very name of Christ in eternal oblivion; and this is the reason why all the historians who lived and wrote in those days are made to say so very little about Christ or his followers. »»»

### ***13 – The Testimonium Flavianum***

There is an indication of this practice in the "Testimonium Flavianum", also discussed by John Crossan in "The birth of Christianity", where he italicises the patently Christian phrases. Some scholars explain the entire section on Jesus as a later Christian insertion, which assumption is based on a passing remark by the celebrated Alexandrian scholar Origen in his *Contra Celsum* (1:47) where he says that, although Josephus recognized the righteousness of James,<sup>16)</sup> the Bishop of Jerusalem, and in his murder a cause of the

---

15) Reverend Mahan says in his introduction to the ArchkoVolume that "there are at least five hundred quotations made from the Talmuds that cannot be found in the present editions". Origen quotes from Celsus, whose writings have partly survived via quotations, owing to the polemic of Origen. Celsus treated the Jewish religion with contempt and was an enemy of Christianity that he called "exitiabilis superstitio" (degenerate and immoral) and so his quote regarding the historicity of the Crucifixion can be trusted. "According to Origen, he quoted Rabbi Akiba who had written that there was a dreadful earthquake at the time of Jesus' Crucifixion, and that the mist that arose from it covered the earth for three hours." The date of Celsus's treatise is fixed in the second half of the second century. Not being able to verify the above statements, I have relegated this passage to the notes. Interestingly in "Against Celsus" Origen writes: «« Celsus imagines that both the earthquake and the darkness were an invention, but regarding these, we have in the preceding pages, made our defence, according to our ability, adducing the testimony of Phlegon of Tralles (2<sup>nd</sup> century), who relates that these events took place at the time when our Saviour suffered... »» (ch. 59)

Jewish overthrow, he did so ‘hosper akon’ (ὅσπερ ἄκων): as it were unwillingly. (see also ad Mt. 10:17) This statement, so says Crossan, cannot be retraced as it stands in the surviving manuscripts of Josephus, which suggest that some Christian censor has been at work here, who might have removed a passage that was deemed to give greater honour to James than to Jesus, possibly in a comparison that defended Jesus’ condemnation for the trouble He had caused and might have caused otherwise, while James was proposed of being of a better kind, one who certainly did not deserve the death penalty. Josephus, of course, was of priestly descent and once a member of the Pharisees, and we should not expect him to be a supporter of the Christian cause. Yet his later friendship with the Romans earned him the hostility of the Jews. So it is realistic to assume that he recorded the histories concerning the Christian movement in a neutral prose and concisely. Regarding the Testimonium, Crossan estimates that the basic content of the non-italicised quotation is most likely original, but this distinction appears out of thin air and thus cannot be taken serious. Here is the full quotation:

«« [1. Movement] About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. [2. Execution] When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified, [3. Continuation] those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life, for the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvellous things about him. [4. Expansion] And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared. »» (Ant. 18:63-64)

The Testimonium Flavianum passage is found in the extant Greek manuscripts of Josephus (Ambrosianus in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Vaticanus in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and Marcianus in the 15<sup>th</sup> century). This passage is quoted by Eusebius in the 4<sup>th</sup> century: in his Evangelical Demonstration; also in the Ecclesiastical History, as well as in the Theophany. But this is not all. Apparently Crossan was not aware of the discovery, or rather the bringing to light again, by professor Shlomo Pines from Israel, of an Arabic version of Josephus from the 10<sup>th</sup> century (which date compares favourably with the Greek versions used by Crossan), which shows a different Testimonium Flavianum:

«« At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. His conduct was good and he was known to be virtuous. Many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die, and those who had become his disciples did not abandon their loyalty to him. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his Crucifixion, and that he was alive. Accordingly they believed that he was the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets recounted marvels. »» (found in Agapius’ Book of the Title)

#### 14 – Why differently?

This testimony is considerably different from what we find in the Greek manuscripts. The accusation blaming the Jews for the death of Jesus is missing, nor does it state that He was the Messiah, but that his disciples regarded him as such after He had appeared to them – as they reported – and they considered Him to be the Messiah “*concerning whom the Prophets recounted marvels*”. Josephus often leaned on the Biblical narrative

---

16) James of Jerusalem was nicknamed ‘The Just’. He wrote the Epistle of James and was, according to Eusebius, the first Bishop of Jerusalem. This James, called the brother of Jesus in the New Testament, appears seventeen times there. The later tradition called him James the Less in order to distinguish him from James the Great, one of the Twelve, who now lies buried in the place of pilgrimage Santiago de Compostella.

for his writings. Indeed, if we look at what the prophet Isaiah says concerning the Messiah, we find many marvellous things. We may reasonably assume that the Arabic text, which is not written from a predisposed Christian frame of mind even though by a Christian Arab who was the Melkite bishop of Hierapolis, is probably what Josephus himself wrote about Jesus. We should infer that Josephus' attitude to the growing Christian community was not entirely unfavourable. Apart from Jesus, he mentions with thoughtful attention the death of his relative James, and it may be no accident that Josephus also tells about John the Baptist. (Ant. 18:116-119, 20:200-203)

I suggest the whole passage by Josephus was blotted out by a zealous baalie suphoth and that a Christian, when he discovered this, reinserted it from memory. This might explain why the whole wording has become different in detail, but remains similar in spirit. If it had been an amplification, as we should normally expect, the original would more or less have resembled the abridged text as proposed by John Crossan. The blotting out and subsequent reinsertion must have happened at an early stage, because Eusebius, the Father of Church History, who lived at the turn of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, already knew it in its present Greek form. (Hist. Eccl. 1:11:7 sqq.) It is a guess, but this could illustrate the obscurantism of the baalie suphoths. In his book on Flavius Joseph Dr Robert Eisler,<sup>17)</sup> gives remarkable examples of the deletions and adaptations introduced by anyone who felt obliged to do so – and that was done by people from all combating parties – which in the course of time resulted in an increasing number of mutilations to several important parts of the original material.

### ***15 – Jewish censorship***

Of course the Jewish censors not only 'corrected' the writings of profane history, but also of sacred history as recorded by their own kind. In their compilation of the Talmud they would leave out everything that had a tendency to favour the Christian creed. In those writings we need not expect to find substantial evidence about the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth, although some traces are still left. But this by no means proves that such records are not to be found. If we could ever get to the original scrolls, we might expect to get at the truth.

Nevertheless, the Ante-Nicene Fathers (before 325 AD) shed light on the question. Take, for instance, Tertullian († ca 225), the first of the Latin Church Fathers. In "An Answer to the Jews" (13:14) he says on account of the events following the Crucifixion: (cf. Roberts & Donaldson: "Ante-Nicene Fathers" - 3:170 and 3:21)

«« My people [says God to the Jews] have changed their glory: whence no profit shall accrue to them: the heaven turned pale thereat. [And when did it turn pale? Undoubtedly, when Christ suffered.] And shuddered most exceedingly, and the sun grew dark at mid-day. And when did it shudder exceedingly, except at the passion of Christ, when the earth also trembled to her centre, and the veil of the Temple was rent, and the tombs were burst asunder? Because these two evils hath my people done: Me [says Christ] they have quite forsaken, the fount of water of life, and they have digged for themselves worn-out tanks, which will not be able to contain water. (Tertullian in his Apology reiterates:) In the same hour, too, the light of day was withdrawn [for several hours], when the sun at the very time was in his meridian blaze. Those who were not aware that this had been predicted about Christ, no doubt thought it an eclipse [which lasts as long as 7 minutes 31 seconds, though most total exlipses are usually much shorter]. **You yourselves [the Jews] have the account of the world-portent still in your archives.** »»

---

17) "The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist – according to Flavius Josephus' recently discovered 'Capture of Jerusalem' and other Jewish and Christian sources" by Robert Eisler – Methuen, London # 1931.



Melito (†180), the bishop of Sardis, known for his Canon of the Bible, which is perhaps older than the Muratorian Canon, writes in “The Discourse on Soul and Body” :

«« ...the earth shook and its foundations trembled. The sun fled away and the elements turned back and the day was changed into night, for they [the heavens] could not endure the sight of their Lord hanging on a tree. The whole creation was stunned. »» (id. Ante-Nicene Fathers - 8:756).

Tertullian also discusses the darkness that fell on the earth during the Crucifixion in his most impressive book, the “Apologeticum” (ch. 21). He wrote that a report of it was kept in the Empire’s secret archives (not accessible to the general public). In the same chapter he states his conviction that emperors such as Tiberius would have believed in Christ had it been possible for them to be Cæsar and Christian simultaneously, an argument that he underpins with his description of the following event:

«« There was an ancient decree that no one should be received for a deity unless he was first approved by the Senate. (...) Tiberius [emperor from 14 to 37], in whose time the Christian name [or religion] had its rise, having received from Palestine, in Syria, an account of such things as confirmed the truth of his [Christ’s] divinity, proposed the matter to the Senate [that He should be enrolled among the Roman gods], and gave his own prerogative vote in favour of the motion; but the Senate, without whose consent such a thing could not take place, rejected it because the Emperor himself [once] had declined the same honour [for himself]. Nevertheless, the Emperor persisted in his opinion, threatening wrath against all accusers of the Christians. »» (ch. 5)

Tertullian continues: “*Search your own commentaries (or public writings). You will there find that Nero (emperor from 54 to 68) was the first who raged with the imperial sword against this sect, making progress then especially at Rome.*” See Appendix-4.

A pupil of St Augustine, the priest Paulus Orosius (ca 375 - after 418), who is known as a great historian, writes in his “History Against the Pagans”:

«« When the Lord Christ had suffered and risen from the dead and had sent forth his disciples to preach, it was then that Pilate, the governor of the province of Palestine, made a report to the Emperor Tiberius and to the Senate concerning the passion and resurrection of Christ, and also the subsequent miracles that had been publicly performed by Him or his disciples in his name. Pilate also stated that a rapidly increasing multitude believed Him to be a god. When Tiberius, with great insistency, proposed to the Senate that Christ should be considered a god, the Senate became indignant because the matter had not been referred to it earlier in accordance with the usual custom, so that it might be the first to pass upon the recognition of a new cult. The Senate therefore refused to deify Christ and issued an edict that the Christians should be banished from the City [of Rome]. There was also the special reason that Sejanus, the prefect of Tiberius, was inflexibly opposed to the recognition of this religion. Nevertheless, in an edict Tiberius threatened denouncers of Christians with death. »» (Hist. Adversum Paganos 7:4)

The meeting of the Senate in Rome, described by Tertullian, suggests that Tiberius was still presiding over the Senate after the Crucifixion of Jesus had taken place. If we place the Crucifixion in the year 29 or 30, as all historians do, this is impossible because Emperor Tiberius retired to Capri, in the Villa Iovis, in the year 26, where he stayed until his death in 37. Why he went there is unclear to present day historians. In my view it is not so difficult to guess, now that we have established that Christ died in the year 26; it had to do with the contemporary events, of which the Crucifixion was not the least. His disgust at the wrangling in Rome will doubtless also have been of influence. From Capri he ruled remarkably efficient by correspondence while the practical power went to Ælius

Sejanus in his function as Prefectus Prætorio (26 - 31 AD). The way Tertullian describes the scene is quite possible and acceptable if we agree that Jesus was crucified that same year. This too underlines the truthfulness of Luke's account, and in this case also that of Tertullianus. Should we be surprised about that, that Tertullian can be trusted?

### ***16 – Further research called for***

I hope that I have thus given a satisfactory answer to the question of why contemporary historical writings appear to be silent on the matter of the Crucifixion. It would not be at odds if authentic contemporary documents exist in the Vatican archives and in libraries in Istanbul, documents that witness to the events that form the basis of our belief. These institutions are enormous and contain extremely old archives that have as yet been insufficiently investigated. In the past no search was carried out for this type of document because the question of the historicity of the Gospels nobody doubted, not even the enemies of the Church, who could well have their suspicions regarding the Resurrection but not over the fact itself of the Crucifixion and the existence of a miracle-worker and teacher known as Jesus. Think about the Mohammedans.<sup>18)</sup> Times have changed, hence the need to put this search on the scientific theological agenda, for it is unreasonable to suppose that the baalie suphoths have succeeded in removing 'all' the records contained in the courts, legislations, and histories of Jesus time.

• • •

---

18) Depending on the interpretation of the following Quranic verses (Quran 4:157-158), Islamic scholars and commentators of the Quran have abstracted different opinions and conflicting conclusions regarding the death of Jesus. Some believe that in the Biblical account, Jesus' Crucifixion did not last long enough for Him to die, while others are of the view that God gave Judas the appearance of Jesus, who revealed his location to those persecuting Him. He replaced Jesus while the executioners thought the victim was Jesus, causing everyone to believe that Jesus was crucified, but actually it was Judas. A third explanation could be that Jesus was nailed to the Cross, but as his soul is immortal he did not 'die' (was not crucified to death); it only appeared so. In opposition to the second and third foregoing proposals, yet others maintain that God does not use deceit and therefore they contend that the crucifixion just did not happen. The above verses go as follows: «« They boasted: "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, God's prophet. However, they killed Him not by crucifying Him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts with no true understanding, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed Him not. Nay, God raised Him up unto Himself, for God is exalted in power and wisdom. »» (source: Wikipedia)

## *The Messianic Expectation as Motivation for the Crucifixion of Christ*



*As a sequel to my article on the date of birth of Jesus, I would now like to deal with the messianic expectation in the intertestamentary period, the findings of which are to a certain degree a result of the discovery that John the Baptist started his mission in the year 19 and that Christ was crucified seven years later. We shall see that the expectation in the Jewish Commonwealth, at the time, was mainly bellicose and, moreover, an exclusively Jewish affair – and thus not based on the assumption of God’s salvation for all the peoples of the earth. Parallels can be drawn with the messianic expectations as they exist today, in about the same region, but now within the Islamic world. Their Messiah, who will set things right in the end of times, is called the ‘al-Mahdi’. Until his coming, it is the sacred duty of each Moslim to hasten the coming of his reign, and their preferred tactic, according to the Coranic instructions, is that of deception and terror.*

### *17 – A God of Vengeance*

The warlike Jewish messianic expectation was mainly based on an interpretation of Psalm 2, together with Daniel 9:25 where, according to the interpretation of those days, it is said that God will give the heathens to Israel as their inheritance and break their enemies, the occupying forces, with a rod of iron. In full, Psalm 2 reads as follows:

«« Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying: “*Let us break their bonds in pieces, and cast away their cords from us!*” He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in his wrath, and distress them in his deep displeasure: “*Have not I set my King on my holy hill of Zion? I will declare the decree. The Lord has said to Me: You are my son. Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall rule them with a rod of iron,*

*You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.*” Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth! Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him! »»

In Psalm 2 the Son is furious at the great ones of the earth and breaks them with a rod of iron, a picture that makes one think of a vengeful God. But what exactly is his vengeance? Justice and mercy cannot be separated. To seek the one without the other is to fail to do justice to Truth. Justice without mercy disavows the character of the Father, who is Love, while mercy without justice could give the impression that everyone may act as he pleases – for, after all, ‘God is good’. But most of the Jews in the time of Jesus failed to grasp this deep thought, such being proved during the Bar Kochba rebellion, which miserably failed, more than a hundred years later.



**Commemorative coin with the bust of Emperor Hadrian**

The famous Rabbi Akiba recognised Simeon Bar Kochba (son of a star) as the Messiah when he had loosed guerrilla warfare on the Roman occupier. Bar Kochba's name is a reference to Numbers 24:17: *“A star shall come out of Jacob; a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult.”* The rebellion was put down in a bloody manner and also Rabbi Akiba was killed. In later times the Jewish scriptural scholars used to call this revolutionary ‘Bar Koziba’ – Son of a Liar.

### **18 – The Expectation of the Jews**

The general expectation in the intertestamentary period, even amongst Jesus disciples, was for a temporal deliverer and warrior king. The deliverer would crush the foreign powers with a rod of iron and establish the supremacy of the Jewish Nation. (Dan. 9:25, Ps. 2) This is superbly illustrated in an anonymous essay assumed to have been written no earlier than the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, by someone steeped in Jewish thought who himself should have been a Jew. This 19-page document, “The Expectation of the Jews”, is available as from page 210. It is written in the form of an apology and counts as a defence of the Christian faith, which, as a matter of fact, should be regarded as the only logical development of the Jewish faith, the New Testament being a prolongement of the Old Testament. Although the identity of the author remains hidden, “The Expectation...” is a masterly work of early Christian-Jewish thought. Below are a few excerpts that throw new light on the Biblical message, in perspective of the general messianism of the time:

«« The universal expectation [in Jesus' time] seems to have been that the Messiah was to be a prophet like unto Moses, yet greater. (...) [But] another and much larger group of people advanced for the messianic prophecies a more worldly meaning. The great personage whose coming they shortly expected was to be a king, but greater than any who had sat upon the Jewish throne. It was with this

expectation, evidently, that Jesus' disciples followed Him through his whole ministry. And even after his resurrection they seem for a while to have entertained the same hopes. One of the questions they asked him after He rose was: "*Are You going to restore in this time the Kingdom to Israel?*" (Acts 1:6) And at the last supper they disputed "*which of them should be the greatest*" (Luke 22:24), that is, who should be highest in office in the new kingdom that He was about to set up. It was with this idea that He was hailed by the multitude into Jerusalem with the shout, "*Hosanna to the Son of David*". (Mt. 21:9) This was the idea that Nathanael meant to express when he said, on receiving the evidence that He was a prophet: "*Rabbi, You are the Son of God, You are the King of Israel*". (John 1:49) That it was his temporal character to which Nathanael here referred we have sufficient evidence in the information which first directed his attention to Jesus: "*We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*" (John 1:45)

The part of the Old Testament from which this title and expectation were taken was principally the second Psalm. The person described in this poem is represented as exalted by God to be a king on Mount Zion in Judeah. The surrounding heathens are represented as being enraged. But God has nevertheless determined that He shall reign and as a king sets his son upon his throne while He yet lives, so has God, as supreme King of Israel, exalted this person to share his authority, and pledges his own power to support his throne. One idea of the Kingdom of the Messiah, derived from this Psalm, was that He was not only to reign over the Jews, but also to destroy all other nations. (...) This Psalm was interpreted by almost all the Jews as relating to the Messiah, and the more readily so as the title Anointed is rendered in the [Greek translation of the] Septuagint as Christos, so that it there reads: "*The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Christ (instead of his Anointed).*" The Messiah, therefore, was to reign on Mount Zion, one of the mountains upon which Jerusalem was built, and reign over the Jews and would with God's help subdue the heathens by war and conquest, break them with a rod of iron, and dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. Such was the kingdom that the great majority of the Jews expected their Messiah to establish.

The expression 'Kingdom of Heaven' is taken from the second chapter of the book of Daniel. After foretelling that there should arise four great monarchies, the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman, the last of which should be a kingdom of iron, he goes on to say: "*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these Kingdoms and it shall stand forever.*" (Dan. 2:44) In another passage: "*I saw in the night a vision, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given unto Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his Kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.*" (Dan. 7:13-14)

(...) The new dispensation under the figure of a kingdom was the subject of the initial petition of one of the chief prayers recited in the synagogues, from Sabbath to Sabbath, and has been so for ages. There is a time, specified in the Book of Daniel, of 70 weeks, which was to intervene between the [start of the] building of the Second Temple and the times of the Messiah, which interpreting according to the prophetic style, a day for a year, would bring the period of his appearance somewhere near the time when John the Baptist began to preach.

So prevalent had this expectation become that it had spread beyond the Holy Land. Tacitus, a historian who wrote in Italia, records the fact that among many "*there was a persuasion that in the ancient books of the priesthood it was written*



*that at this precise time the East should become mighty, and that those issuing from Judeah should rule the world.”* (Histories xiii) Suetonius, another Roman historian, writes: *“that in the East an ancient and constant opinion prevailed that it was fated (foretold) there should issue at that time from Judeah those who should obtain universal dominion.”* (Vespasian iv)



This confident expectation of the Jews had already caused no little political disturbance. It was this proud anticipation of universal conquest that made them so restive under the government of the Romans. That they who were destined to reign over the world – and whose King Messiah was to have the heathens for his inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, who was to break them with a rod of iron, and dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel (Psalm 2) – should be in vassalage to a foreign power, was more than they could bear. Josephus relates that about the time of the birth of Christ, when Quirinius was sent to take a census of Judeah, Judas, a native of Gamala in Galilee, rose up and resisted the Roman Commissioner and raised a great rebellion. (Ant. 18:1) He is mentioned likewise by Gamaliel in his speech before the Jewish Sanhedrin, when the apostles were brought before them for preaching Jesus as the Messiah, immediately after his ascension: *“After this man (Theudas), rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of taxing, and drew away many people after him; he also perished, and all who obeyed him, were dispersed.”* (Acts 5:37)<sup>19)</sup> Josephus speaks generally of the troubles of those times, without specifying causes: *“And now Judeah was full of robberies, and as the several companies*

*of the seditious would light upon anyone to head them, he was created a king immediately, in order to do mischief to the public.” (Ant. 10:8)*

This was exactly the state of the country during the ministry of Jesus, and it explains his caution in proclaiming Himself the Messiah, and his withdrawal as soon as a multitude collected about Him and manifested any tendency to sedition or disturbance. It is recorded of Him, that after the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, and the declaration made concerning Him – *“This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world”* (John 6:14) – that Jesus perceived that they would come and take Him by force and make Him a king, that He then decided to depart again unto a mountain Himself alone. In another instance, likewise, when He had healed the man at the pool of Bethesda: *“And the one was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place.”* (John 5:13) »»

### **19 – God loves all men**

«« Such being the expectation of the Jews, as we learn from profane history, a man of singular habits and appearance began to preach in a retired part of Judeah, where there were but a few large towns: *“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!”* (Mt. 3:2) This man was of the sacerdotal tribe and had been consecrated to God from his infancy by the vow of the Nazarite. His habits and dress were those of a hermit, his food such as he could pick up in the fields and woods. (Mt. 3:4) He was literally: *“The voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God”*. (Is. 40:3, John 1:19-31) He professed to have been moved by divine impulse to proclaim the immediate approach of the Messiah. A man of such singular appearance, bearing such an important message, produced a great sensation, and excited the strongest curiosity. Crowds from all parts of Judeah flocked together to see and hear him. Some thought that he was the Messiah. His fame soon reached Jerusalem, and the Jewish authorities sent a deputation of priests and Levites to inquire who he was. He told them that he was not the Messiah, but was sent to introduce Him. *“I came to point Him out to Israel.”* (Not found in the Bible.) Here was undoubtedly stated the true reason why he was raised up by divine providence to prepare the Jewish mind for the great message from God they were going to receive, to shape their ideas from the crude mass of traditions which had excited among them into some resemblance to the dispensation that the Messiah was about to establish. *“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, that all men through him might believe. He was not the Light, but was sent to bear witness of the Light.”* (John 1:6-8)

The effect of his preaching was precisely what was intended. He produced a strong impression upon the public mind, and, though he wrought no miracle, all men held him to be a prophet. He presented a strong contrast, and probably by design, to the pretenders to divine mission who appeared about that time. It was on this account that the multitudes gathering about him created no uneasiness in the public authorities. A man, like John, who clothed himself in the coarsest attire, in a country where the higher classes were studious of ornament, and all who had any pretensions to official dignity were distinguished by gorgeous apparel, would naturally escape all suspicion of political ambition. (Mt. 11:7-10, Luke 7:24-27)

---

19) The writer of this essay is mistaken when he says: “Josephus relates that about the time of the birth of Christ, when Quirinius was sent to take a census of Judeah, Judas, a native of Gamala in Galilee, rose up and resisted the Roman Commissioner”. The passage refers to Josephus’s Antiquities 18:2-4. It refers to the second census of 6-9 AD, but Jesus was born earlier, in 8 BC.

(...) It does not appear that John had any particular person in his mind when he commenced his mission, but was merely informed by God, who sent him to preach, that the Messiah should be pointed out to him by some miraculous appearance. He had known Him previously as someone of great piety and excellence, for when Jesus came to be baptized, John said to Him: *"I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"* (Mt. 3:13) But as the Messiah he had no knowledge of Him, for he testifies: *"I did not know Him"*, that is, as the Messiah, *"but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me: 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit'"*. (John 1:33)

John collected around him a company of disciples whom he instructed in the mysteries of religion, and many of them seem to have remained with him after he was cast into prison, till he was beheaded by Herod.

(...) The mind of John the Baptist furnishes a remarkable example, we often see, of partial divine illumination, the clearest knowledge on some points and absolute ignorance on others. By the light of inspiration he shadowed forth in a few words the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven, whose approach he foretold, and showed it to be something entirely different from the expectation of the Jews, handed down from remote ages. Yet of its details his ideas seem to have been vague, and he appears to have had no certain knowledge that Jesus was the Messiah, though he had baptized Him and received the heavenly sign of which they had been forewarned. »»»

#### ***John had no certain knowledge about the Messiah***

The remark *"John the Baptist appears to have had no certain knowledge that Jesus was the Messiah"* needs clarification. At the time Jesus was baptised, John the Baptist thought that he had the certain knowledge that Jesus was the Messiah. Until then he had known Him personally, and he valued Him more highly than himself, but only after the foretold sign of the Holy Ghost had taken place, who descended like a dove on Jesus, and after the 'Bath kole' - the Voice of God - had resounded from heaven with (Mt. 3:17): *"You are My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased"*, only then did John know that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah. In the certainty of those days he exclaimed (John 1:34-35): *"This is the Son of God!, and the next day, looking at Jesus: Behold the Lamb of God!"* But later, when locked up in the gloomy and stinking cell of the Tetrarch Herod, he realised that his expectations concerning a glorious and a triumphant Messiah had been belied. And he was thrown back and forth between the certainty of his expectation and the certainty of the signs that were revealed to him, which now seemed a distant memory, and he started to have agitating doubts about the messiahship of Jesus – Who, after all, was his nephew.

### ***20 – The voice of one crying in the wilderness***

«« One truth John the Baptist announced, bears evident marks of supernatural origin – since it contradicted the conceptions and prejudices of the age – that the Messiah and his Kingdom were not to be national, not belonging de jure and exclusively to the posterity of Abraham alone. There is a maxim in the rabbinic writings, as common as the very letters of the alphabet, that *"All Israel has a share in the 'World to Come' (Olam Haba)"* (Sanhedrin 11), that is, in the Messianic Kingdom, merely by virtue of their descent from Abraham. They had not the slightest notion that it was to be a kingdom selected from Israel and other nations, a new community by no means coextensive with the seed of Abraham.



That it was to be a moral and a spiritual kingdom was a far cry from their usual concepts. *“Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand! (...) Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance, and say not, we have Abraham for our father, for God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.”* (Mt. 3:2, 9). Do not imagine that you are to belong to the Kingdom of God merely because you are descended from Abraham. God is able to raise up children to Abraham from a source now as improbable to you as the stones beneath your feet, from among the Gentiles even, whom you are accustomed to call dogs, and count as the scum of the earth. A discrimination is about to take place, not between the children of Abraham and other nations, but between the good and the bad, even among the Jews themselves.

### ***The Signs of the Messiah***

We find this episode in Matthew 11:2-6: *“And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him: ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’ Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Go and tell John the things you hear and see: “The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”* Jesus could have continued: ‘...as at the time they were annoyed when I preached in Nazareth, and they wanted to throw Me off the rocks.’ The signs named are a reference to Isaiah 61:1, the passage repeated in the sermon that Jesus preached in Nazareth. And they are also a reference to Isaiah 35:4-5: *“Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing.”* There is an important story in the Slavonic version of Flavius Josephus, wherein the priests use the opposing argument to prove that under no circumstances could Herod the Great be the Messiah: *“It has been determined that under the Anointed One the lame will walk and the blind see, but under this man the totally healthy have been made lame, those who could see have been made blind and the rich poor.”*

Jesus showed compassion. That was one of the signs of the Messiah as He walked on earth. Throughout his ministry, Jesus Messiah revealed his compassion and heartbreak for his countrymen. *“Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.”* (Mt. 9:36) He felt compassion for them when they hungered, for He told the disciples: *“I feel compassion for the people.”* (Mk. 8:2) He was moved by the blind, as Scripture says: *“Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes.”* (Mt. 20:34) He felt compassion for the sick, as Scripture says: *“Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him.”* (Mk. 1:41) He felt deeply moved for the bereaved and the mourning at a funeral, as the Scripture says: *“When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her: ‘Do not weep’.”* (Lk. 7:13) When He saw the mourners bewailing the death of his personal friend, Lazarus, Scripture says: *“Jesus wept”.* (John 11:35) Even in the hour of his greatest acclamation, of his triumphal entry in the great town, the very moment when the Jewish people indeed accepted Him as the Messiah, He wept: *“When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it.”* (Lk. 19:41)

(...) But after all this knowledge of the nature of the Kingdom, or Christianity, which was possessed by John the Baptist, and after baptising Jesus with his own hands, and receiving the divine testimony of which he had been forewarned, so caught up was he with the Jewish prejudices, of the temporal splendor and power of the Messiah, and so discouraged by his long imprisonment, that he sent two of his disciples to inquire whether He were actually the Messiah. Jesus sent them

back to tell all they saw and heard, and to leave him to form his own judgement, adding what throws light on the reasons of John's doubts: "*Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me*" (Mt. 11:6, Luke 7:23), who does not consider the lowliness of My appearance incompatible with the loftiness of my pretensions. »»

## 21 – *A peace-loving Jesus, that was unacceptable !!*

«« (...) To exemplify the principles which I have laid down, to show the wisdom, the miraculous knowledge of Jesus, the full understanding that He had of the whole system from the beginning, and the manner in which He insinuated the glorious and eternal truths of Christianity through the messianic phraseology of that time, I shall proceed to analyse some of his first discourses.

(...) On his arrival at Nazareth, his previous residence, He attempted to preach in the synagogue where he had been accustomed to worship. The people listened to the first part of his discourse with pleasure and admiration, though, according to a strong propensity of human nature, they were disposed to sneer at Him as the son of a carpenter. At the first hint, however, of the doctrine that the new dispensation was not to be a national religion, but to be extended to Gentile as well as Jew, they became violently enraged. They might have been led to suspect that he was not altogether sound in the national faith of a Messiah who was to destroy the heathens, from his manner of quoting that striking passage of Isaiah: "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the glad tidings to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*" (Is. 61:1-2, Luke 4:18-19) Here He stopped. The rest of the sentence is (still Is. 61:2): "*...and the day of vengeance of our God*". Had he quoted the rest of the sentence without explanation, as applicable to Himself, they would have understood Him to sanction their expectation that He was to destroy and not to save the other nations of the earth, and would have perhaps cried out: 'Hosanna to the son of David!' But not only did He pass over this most important part of their messianic traditions, so comforting to them under the present political oppression, but He went on to intimate that the heathens were not only to be spared, but to be admitted into the Kingdom of the Messiah: "*I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias (...) but to none of them was Elias sent except to Sarepta, a city of Sidon, to a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the days of Eliseus the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.*" (Luke 4:25-27) This was too much. A Messiah who could tolerate or look favourably upon the heathens, was not to be endured. "*And all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city, and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went his way and came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath.*" (Luke 4:28-31) »»

This exposition illustrates the bellicose attitude of the majority of Judeans in Jesus' day, which is further evidenced by the Qumran scrolls found at and near the military outpost of that name, overseeing the routes to Jerusalem via the Northern way around the Dead Sea. During the Great War with Rome that started in 66 AD, scrolls were brought there and to other places in the Wilderness of Judeah that stretched from Jericho all the way down to Massada,<sup>20)</sup> which is the military outpost at the Southern route around the Dead Sea. It is now accepted by many scholars, not in the least because of the insistence and arguments of Professor Norman Golb and Professor Alan D. Crown that at Qumran there was not an Essene community. I guess that many of these scrolls were copies from the

Temple archives in Jerusalem. They were not the originals because the rebels at the wood-bearers' feast had burnt everything in their eagerness to destroy the papers recording debts, and thus they hoped to win the debtors to their cause. (Jewish War 2:247) The scrolls discovered ought to have been considered items of great value that at all cost had to be preserved from the destruction of war. Experts have identified the remains of 870 separate scrolls. They constitute a valuable source of information regarding the spiritual fervour during the Second Temple Period. They provide a kaleidoscopic overview of the evolving Jewish literary life at the time.

## 22 – *The liberation theology from those days*

The historian Neil Asher Silberman writes in "The Hidden Scrolls" :

«« It is not at all unlikely that among the thousands of resisters-turned-martyrs who arose in the time of Pontius Pilate was a charismatic religious leader named Jesus who, arrested for subversive teaching, was put to death by the Romans and was, like all the other holy warriors and pious victims, assured bodily resurrection from the grave, according to the interpretation of Daniel 12:2 where it says [in one of the Qumran scrolls] that the deliverers "*who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake*". This powerful belief in the immortality of any Jews who willingly chose to be religious martyrs seems first to have arisen in the wars and religious revivals of the Maccabean period. »»<sup>21)</sup>

Silberman's way of seeing things is not so foolish, for it is the logical conclusion for someone like him, who does not believe in Christ's resurrection as being told by the Gospels. A few pages further Silberman also discusses the view of professor Robert Eisenman,<sup>22)</sup> which I subscribe to for its general tenet because it agrees perfectly well with the presentation of facts in *The Expectation of the Jews*:

«« What Eisenman suggests is that the original angry gospel of Jewish messianism, expressed clearly in the Qumran literature, is typical of the idealistic, fundamentalist, even revolutionary faith of many first-century Judeans – in spite of the fact that Josephus, the New Testament, and rabbinic literature, each for their own reasons, wanted either to minimize the popularity of this distinctive brand of

---

20) The Jewish War (66–73 AD), sometimes called The Great Revolt, was the first major rebellion against the Roman Empire. It ended when Titus destroyed Jerusalem, looted and burned Herod's Temple and finally took Massada. The Roman commander Flavius Silva wanted to reach a compromise with the Jewish Zealots and withdraw his legion. Events, however, led to his besieging the fortress of Massada. There the Romans had to fight both the merciless climate and the harsh landscape, and the passion and ingenuity of Eleazar Ben Yair and his people, who had taken refuge in the 'invincible' fortress. The 1981 film "Massada" shows Peter O'Toole in an impressive episode, called "The Leaders Meet" (unfortunately taken off the Internet – because politically incorrect?).

21) Silberman Neil Asher: "The Hidden Scrolls - Christianity, Judaism, & the War for the Dead Sea Scrolls", A Grosset/Putnam Book - NY # 1994. Quotes p. 186 and 190.

22) Robert Eisenman is professor at the California State University in Long Beach. He completed his studies of Hebrew and the History of the Near East at the New York University with a dissertation on Islamic law. His works include: "James the Just in the Habakkuk Peshier" (in collaboration with H. Robert) published by the scientific publishers Brill in Leiden, 1986, and also, with the same publisher in '83: "Maccabees, Zadokites, Christians, and Qumran". In 1992, in collaboration with Michael Wise, he published a translation of a number of Dead Sea scrolls. Eisenmann was subjected to heavy criticism because he was the first to refuse to join those who held that the Qumran scrolls belonged to an Essenian sect that was said to have taken refuge in Qumran, something which at the time of this writing is still the consensus scholarship, but which is very clearly on the wrong path.

popular Biblical religion [liberation theology, you might call it] or to disavow their own participation in it. For Eisenman, the Qumran Teacher of Righteousness was not an evolutionary ancestor of Jesus. He and the other apocalyptic teachers of the era were activists in a single powerful movement, unmovably faithful to the idea that the one True God would lead the Jews to victory over the Romans and their despicable Judean collaborators – no matter how incomparably powerful the forces of Darkness presently seemed. »»



*Qumran scrolls (4Q386 en 4Q325), photographed by Tsila Sagiv*

This point of view is illustrated by Qumran's famous "War Scroll", on permanent display in the Shrine of the Book in Western Jerusalem which, to use the words of Neil Silberman, is "*a kind of chapel of relics dedicated to the miracle of national rebirth*". This considerably damaged scroll describes the last vengeful battle, a small fragment of which reads: <sup>23)</sup>

«« For into the hand of the oppressed You will deliver the [ene]mies of all the lands; into the hands of those who are prostrate in the dust, in order to bring down all mighty men of the peoples, to return the recompense of the wicked on the heads of [the stubborn], to pronounce the just judgement of your truth on all children of Man, and to make for Yourself an everlasting name among the people. [...] the wars, and to show Yourself great and holy before the remnant of the nations, so that [they] may know [that] [You are God ...when You] carry out judgements on Gog and on all his company that are as[semb]led [abou]t [us...] [...], for You will do battle against them from the [high] heave[ns...] upon them for [everlasting] confusion. »» (Square brackets, as applied by Silberman, surround reconstructed words. This may be a simple guess, a calculated probability, or a word that is virtually certain. Portions in square brackets do not actually appear in the Scroll.)

### **23 – Dragged from oblivion**

The conclusion is inevitable: if a movement had started after the crucifixion and Christ had not risen from the dead, it should logically have been a rebellious one, like that of the dagger-bearers, the Sicarii, who waged terror against the hated Romans. But the long list of the Judaic revolutionary movements is almost forgotten. We only know a few names like John of Gischala, Menahim ben Judah, Eliezer ben Yair and Simon ben Giora. They have become vague figures. Jesus, on the contrary, is still remembered.

Because the religious leaders possessed a strongly developed awareness of history, they very well knew that it was not enough to get rid of Jesus physically: He also had to be removed from the minds of the people, which meant ridding themselves of Him as an

---

23) From the English translation of Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook in "The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation", HarperCollins - New York # 1996. (fragment 1QM ≈ 11:13-20 on p. 161).

historical figure. By crucifying Jesus and allowing Him to die in ignominy, his name would disappear. In “The 24 Hours of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ”, Luisa Piccarreta relates of the time of the execution: *“The Jews wished to crucify Jesus in order to have Him die in ignominy so that his name would be wiped off the face of the earth.”* Israel’s religious leadership wished to cast him into the chasm of oblivion by his manner of dying. They have therefore changed his adorable Name Jeshua, as He was originally called in Hebrew, in Yeshu. And under that name he is known up to now by most Jews, which is an acronym for “**Y**immach **S**hemo **V**e-zikro”, which means *“May his name and memory be blotted out”*. (Jer. 11:18) However, most Jews are not aware of it and assume that Yeshu is Jesus’ real name. The Jews still have a saying that he whose memory is kept alive is not really dead. In this context it is extremely bitter that the founder of Hasidism, Ba’al Shem Tov (1700-1760), or the “Master of the Good Name”, taught: *“Oblivion leads to banishment while in the thoughts is hidden the secret of salvation”*, a calligraphed saying that every official visitor to Israel’s Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial is given. It is so bitter precisely because Israel’s salvation and glory lies hidden in the grateful remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross, a memory of which they wish to have no knowledge. By crucifying Jesus in such a terrible manner, between two criminals and observed by an enormous crowd of people, probably in the millions,<sup>24)</sup> who had come together from every corner of the world to celebrate Pesach and were immensely happy to be able to take part in the great festivities in Jerusalem – yes, that must have been extremely demoralising for his followers. An anonymous Passionist Father (initials C.P.) writes in “The Mystery of the Crown of Thorns” : (pp. 82-83)

«« Our divine Lord (...) knows that the chief priests and Jewish magistrates demand his crucifixion that He may die in extreme pain and deepest ignominy, and thus his memory may forever be branded with infamy. Our Lord knows that these bad and malicious men not only desire to deprive Him of life, but by the nature and circumstances of his death, they are anxious to render his name infamous and detestable among all future generations. Saint John Chrysostom asks himself: *“Why do the chief priests and Jewish magistrates demand the Crucifixion of Jesus?”* (and answers:) *“Because it was ignominious.”* They were afraid lest his memory should be transmitted to posterity with honor; hence, to prevent this, they select the death of the cross, not reflecting that truth shines more powerfully when an attempt is made to conceal it: *“cum impeditur magis apparet veritas”*. »»

The Prophet Jeremiah says in verse 19, chapter 11:

«« I was like a docile lamb brought to the slaughter and did not know that they had devised schemes against Me, saying: *“Let us destroy the tree with its fruit and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be remembered no more.”* »»

I like to draw your attention to the Book of Truth, where on April 9<sup>th</sup> 2014, the Virgin Mary, who calls herself here the Mother of Salvation, says the following:

«« When Judas Iscariot betrayed my son, Jesus Christ, it had far-reaching consequences. Because he was one of my son’s closest allies, and as a member

---

24) According to Wolfgang Reinhardt and others, a population figure for Jerusalem under the Roman occupation of 60 to 120 thousand seems plausible, which is true for even the higher end of this scale in the twenties of our Christian era. The enormous group of Passover pilgrims needs to be added to that. Forty years after the Crucifixion the number of pilgrims counted according to Flavius Josephus at least three million, which seems to be reliable because it is confirmed by several angles of attack and Josephus knew these numbers from firsthand experience, for he was then, in the time of glory of Jerusalem, in the year 66 AD, about thirty years old (see Ant. 17:213-14 and Bell. Jud. 2:280, 6:423-29).



of his precious apostles, his betrayal was very painful for my son. Because he, a traitor, came from within my son's Domain, this meant that doubts crept in amongst those who were unsure as to whether or not my son was, indeed, the True Messiah. The doubts spread and many of his apostles and followers felt confused, lost and afraid. They knew that once He was seized by his enemies, the Truth would be questioned and then denied. They also knew that, were they to defend my son publicly, they would also suffer and could have ended up having to endure the same punishment meted out to Him. They knew also that they would not have had the courage to stand defiantly against his enemies, for fear of ridicule. »»

Logically Jesus would have been speedily confined to oblivion had it not been for his Resurrection. It's unthinkable that a movement, the Christian movement, could have started if the Resurrection had never taken place. People as a group need a stimulus to go into action – and here, under normal circumstances, such a stimulus would have been lacking. Cicero, Roman statesman and literary genius, who died a generation before Christ's birth and can thus be regarded as an unprejudiced commentator, wrote in his "Pro Rabirio" (5:16): "*Even the word 'cross' must not only remain far from the lips of the inhabitants of Rome, but it must also remain banned from their thoughts, from their eyes, from their ears.*" This was written at a time when crucifixion had become a normal Roman punishment, meant for society's rejects, the most guilty and criminal elements, rebels and especially slaves. After the slaves' revolt led by Spartacus in 71 BC, 6000 bodies, grossly tortured, hung along the road from Capua in southern Italy up to Rome. In Jesus' time Varus, the legate of Syria, had 2000 Israelites crucified who had risen up against the authority of Rome after the death of Herod the Great.<sup>25)</sup> Only their numbers are known, not their names.

It should be noted that punishment by Crucifixion was not originally a Roman invention. The earliest known reference is by Herodotus who describes the execution of a Persian general at the hands of the Athenians in about 479 BC: "*Having nailed Artacyctes to a plank they left him hanging thereupon.*" (Her. 9:120) The Phoenicians introduced it to Rome in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. (Retief - S Afr Med J. 2003 pp.938-41) This method of execution was already adopted by the Jews before the Roman general Pompey captured Jerusalem in 63 BC. As early as 162 BC Bacchides and the high priest Alkimus had 60 devout Jews crucified. (1 Macc. 7:16, Ant. 12:396) A Qumran text speaks of: "*Then you shall hang him on a tree that he may die.*" (11Q:64); as well as, "*Crucifixion was the custom in Israel of old.*" (4Q:169) The Aramaic testament of Levi (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. BC) shows that Crucifixion was routinely practiced by the Jews, at least from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. It is fair to postulate that it was the Jews who demanded Jesus' Crucifixion, as this

---

25) The fact that crucifixion was a normal punishment, as far as the Romans were concerned, does not mean that Christ was given 'standard treatment': He was subjected to a terrible and unique combination of punishments and it is entirely acceptable to imagine that He would have died at a much earlier stage but for the divine intervention.

In the night before his execution, the Temple guards pierced his body with nails and gave Him terrible other tortures. (Source: revelation by the Venerable Sister Maria Magdalena Bentivoglio (1834 - 1905) of the Order of Saint Clare.) On the day itself Jesus was scourged with sharp objects fixed to the end of the whips, a manner forbidden by law (which does not plead for Pilate). Under normal circumstances the Roman scourging was so terrible that the victim often died. And the crown of thorns was 'thrice' forced onto his glorious head, causing terrible pain. (Source: Luisa Piccarreta (1865-1947), called "The Little Daughter of the Divine Will".) The bushes that grow in the region have monstrous thorns. Like steel pins they pierced his skull. In addition to these extra tortures, Jesus had to drag the heavy crossbeam to Golgotha, his one shoulder bared to the bone. Finally the nails on which He hung were set far too wide apart, thereby pulling his body asunder in an extremely painful manner. (Confirmed by Piccarreta and others.) See also the important message in the Book of Truth of March 29 2012: "Jesus reveals details of his Crucifixion".

fits the historical context. The Roman authority initially opposed the request, and that is beyond dispute.

The cross, that awful instrument of torture (from which the word excruciating is derived), was truly an instrument for wiping someone out of the collective memory. For this reason, if we are looking for a reason to explain the spectacular and peaceful rise of the early Church – of a vital impulse provided with the mighty wind of the Holy Spirit – then surely it must be sought in Christ's Resurrection! Daniel Rops, member of the highly prestigious "Académie Française" wrote in 1951 "Saint Paul" that immediately hit the bestseller list in both France and England. He noted that, in the beginning, "*the number (converted) was not yet very impressive*", a statement I fully agree with in view of the huge gathering of pilgrims in God's chosen land, who had come for the two religious festivals and were witness to the spectacular events surrounding the Crucifixion. These events go a long way in explaining why Jesus has not disappeared from the annals of history, quite the contrary. The resurrection explains the unexplainable. I call attention to the deep darkness that fell upon the earth for several hours, and tremors of an earthquake were felt everywhere, as far as Rome and Greece, which drove the pillars of the Temple of Jerusalem from their plinth. This was followed by many saints rising up from their graves in the vicinity of the town and they appeared to the people as a sign of admonition. Such was the cascade of events that the Roman centurion and his battle-hardened soldiers, who guarded Jesus at the place of execution, became so impressed that they cried out: "*Surely He was the Son of God!*" (Mt. 27:45-54). And then, of course, there was the Pentecost, only 50 days later, with a tremendous outpouring of the Holy Ghost, who gave the disciples the fervor and courage to bring everywhere the good tidings, ...and they spoke to each group of pilgrims in their own language! Daniel Rops says:

«« When Peter had spoken on the threshold of the Cenacle on Pentecost, a certain number of those present had been strongly moved; they repented having endorsed the juridical murder of the Son of Man and they asked to receive that visible mark of pardon, called baptism. A little later, the miraculous cure by two of Christ's faithful, Peter and John, of a cripple squatting in the gateway to the Temple, had completed the effect of their preaching: the number of baptized had increased. Nonetheless, the number was not yet very impressive! 'Three thousand' (Acts 2:41), at the maximum 'five thousand'. [So is written in the original French.] A trifle, in truth, this handful of nonconformists in the entirety of the Jewish community: a community [in the land itself, but most of them living abroad], that ranged round its government of priests with its vigilant guardians of strict observances and of the Law. »» (ch. 1, from the translation by Jex Martin)

## 24 – *Jesus considered a revolutionary*

To give a fair picture I should also mention that in fragments of Josephean literature are some hints of revolutionary activity on the part of a few bands of primitive semi-Christians. In the Bible itself there is no mention of it; in the book of Acts 9:2 the early followers of Christ are called "*those of the Way*". Yet such a hint is to be found in a mediæval Hebrew translation, known as the Josippon, made by a converted Jew on the basis of Josephus' Latin version "*Bellum Judaicum*". Dr Robert Eisler describes how in the 9<sup>th</sup> century this manuscript was worked over by some Jews in the interests of Judaism and that for this revision they used a Greek manuscript of Josephus, which had apparently escaped the Christian censorship that had expurgated all the existing Greek versions, thus supposedly rendering the Josippon nearer to the original text; however, the various mediæval versions of this revised Josippon were sought out by the ecclesiastical censors and the offending passages deleted more or less completely; a failure to be absolutely thorough on the part of some censors in three different manuscripts permits the reconstruction of a passage in which the followers of Jesus are described as the "*robbers of*

*our people*” who are depicted as fighting against the Pharisees during the time of Gaius (emperor from 37 to 41 AD). There is also a passage in the Slavonic version of Josephus that tells how, during the time of Claudius (emperor from 41 to 54 AD), many of Jesus’ followers aroused the Jewish proletariat of Palestine by foretelling that their Master, whom they assert to be alive, would free them from their bondage. The movement, however, was promptly suppressed by the Roman authorities. That unseemly representation should not be rejected out of hand because some misguided groups, calling themselves Jesus folk, may have existed in Palestine during the first period of the flowering church. However, it could also have been a tactical move on the part of the Jewish anti-Christian propaganda to misrepresent the young church as a subversive movement. To this end, it could have been presented as a movement against heathen Rome, provoking retaliatory action, while the leading Jewish class had acted much more prudently, supposedly always having in mind the national interest and well-being of the people.

This depiction is found in the Slavonic version of Josephus’ “Jewish War”, of which the parts that concern Christianity are to be found in the assembled works translated by H. St. John Thackeray (App. vol. 3), who states in the introduction that some scholars are willing to accept that the Slavonic version typifies some intermediate stage between the original in its native tongue and its extant Greek text, an opinion that he is later willing to endorse, at least tentatively, in his study of Josephus as a man and historian.<sup>26)</sup> Josephus was originally a townsman of Palestine and it is probable that the “Jewish War” was first drafted in Hebrew, his native tongue, a work that appeared in Greek in the years 77-78 when he was already living in Rome under the patronage of the Roman emperors.

In the first passage of the Slavonic version Jesus is referred to as “*a man, if we may call Him such*” and the wonder-worker, who uses his miraculous power to perform many healings. He is briefly condemned for breaking the [Jewish] Law and violating the Sabbath, but it is also expressly stated that He did nothing shameful. His influence stirred many Jews to hope that He would be instrumental in freeing them from the foreign yoke. In consequence He



was invited to lead an insurrection in Jerusalem and cut down the Roman troops. Before any effective action was taken, the Jewish leaders – seeing the sword already drawn – warned Pilate, who took repressive action, as a result of which the Wonder-worker was captured and condemned as a rebel desirous of kingship. This implicates that Jesus’ sentencing was motivated by the Pharisees’ fear of an insurrection under his leadership. This seems in complete contradiction to Jesus’ determination to withdraw at the slightest sign of the people becoming rebellious. And yet it is essentially true, which is elucidated by making a distinction between the years of Jesus’ preaching and the week and events that preceded his Crucifixion.

## 25 – *Until the Messiah Prince...*

To find out about what happened in this particular week we should consider the Jewish way of thinking of those days, which was bent on the interpretation of Daniel 9:24-26. Daniel reads: “*Seventy weeks [70] are determined for your people to finish the transgression (...) from the command to build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince shall be seven plus sixty-two [69] weeks.*” In “The Expectation of the Jews” is written:

---

26) H. St. John Thackeray is an authority in his field and has made a superb translation of “The Jewish War”.



«« There was a time specified in the Book of Daniel of seventy weeks, which was to intervene between the [start of the] building of the second Temple and the ‘times’ (plural) of the Messiah, which, interpreting according to the prophetic style a day for a year, would bring the period of his appearance somewhere near the time when John the Baptist began to preach. »»

And thus serious consideration was given to the fact that the appearance of the precursor (John the Baptist) was 483 years [69x7] after the beginning of the reconstruction of the Temple, which, of course, was no more than a guess because the exact date was not known. This interpretation is very interesting because it sheds new light on the motivation that would lead to the Crucifixion of our Lord and Saviour. As we have already established, John the Baptist started his mission in the year 19 and Christ was crucified in 26. According to the calculation in “The Expectation of the Jews” – which then seems to have been the normal routine – the 69 weeks ended ‘near’ 19 AD, which brings the end of week 70 to 26 AD.<sup>27)</sup> Therefore in relation to the messianic claims of Jesus’ mission and his sensational miracles, his contemporaries must have considered the start of John’s mission in 19 AD a moment of great importance. They must have come to the conclusion that this occurred just after the end of Daniel’s 69 weeks. The approach of the year 26 must have evoked a general sense of feverish expectation, because then the 70 weeks would have elapsed! That we may include John’s mission in the mission of Christ appears from the old dictum: *“If you see the Precursor, you may say: The mission of ha-Yeshua Mashiach has begun!”* This last week was the time of grace, but the Jews have not seized the opportunity, which has put a distance between them and God and caused a postponement until the time that they would be able to seize the grace being offered, now offered again at threshold of the Millennium Age.

This article was written in 2003, and amazingly corresponds with a message given by Jesus on 11 March 2013 to a French housewife under the pseudonym of JNSR. The message is called: “This is the time when the Antichrist begins his reign” :

«« We have entered the time of the end, of which the last 7 days are called the “Time of Nations” (Zech. 2:11). They are included in the ‘490 years’ [of Daniel] when Israel was undergoing penance that God imposed upon her because of her idolatry. This time will end with the offer that our Lord made to them in his Holy Resurrection: ‘7 years of Grace’ in honor of the Great Universal Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, for the Kingdom of God on Earth was meant for this time, when Israel also benefited from ‘7 years of forgiveness’.

But Israel’s refusal cancelled the remission of the sentence of 7 years. God our Father, offended by this refusal, transposed their penance for 7 years... to the end of time. It is said: “You will be saved through each other”, which also means that you will ‘pay’ also for each other because you also are not without sin... as you would tend to believe...

We do not know when it will start or has started, the last seven years, we all suffer... to earn the Glorious Return of the Son of Man and Son of GOD. Jesus returns as is said: “At the end of the last tribulation...” »»

---

27) I write: “According to the calculation in “The Expectation of the Jews” the 69 weeks ended ‘near’ 19 AD.” This is the only conclusion possible on the grounds of the citation from this essay, because it assumes as self-evident that there was a period of 7 years (the difference between 69 and 70 weeks) between the start of the mission of the Precursor (in this case, John the Baptist) and the end of the Messiah’s mission. Well, that is impossible according to the currently prevailing chronology, but it fits in perfectly with the chronology I established. Hence my statement that according to the opinion (then), week 69 agrees ‘approximately’ with 19 AD.

The full text of Daniel 9:24-26 reads:

«« Seventy sevens (not shavuot for ‘weeks’ but shavuim, which means sevens) are determined for your people and for your holy city to finish the transgression: to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the command to return and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven sevens and sixty-two sevens (69x7). The streets shall be built again, and the moat, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two sevens Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself. And the people of the prince who is to come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of [the seventy weeks] shall be with a flood, and till the end war and desolations are determined. (The beginning of verse 27 continues:) Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week... »»

Zechariah 2:11 reads:

«« And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day (known as the Time of Nations), and they shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of you, and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. »»

Daniel’s sevens are divided into three separate blocks: (A) 7 x seven, (B) 62 x seven and (C) 1 x seven. During the first block of time of 49 years Jerusalem would “*be built again, with street and moat, even in troublesome times*”. The second block of 62 sevens or 434 years immediately follows the first one for a total of 69 sevens or 483 years, the end-point of which goes “*unto Messiah the Prince (or Christ King)*”, which in retrospect appears to be the year of birth of Jesus of Nazareth. The peculiar way of formulating these blocks implies that the last multiple of seven – the 70<sup>th</sup> – does not necessarily have to follow immediately after the period of 69x, as in the sentence: “the work took 14 months, not counting the one month holiday in between”. That the week mentioned in verse 27 (which we will not further discuss) is something quite different is evidenced by the preceding verse stating that the 70 weeks end with a flood: the first flood was with water – that of Noah, the second was with blood – that of the Crucifixion (Mt. 20:22, Mk 10:38, Luke 12:50) and the third will be with fire (Luke 12:49). The way of seeing things then, was that the first ‘day’ of week 70 was in 19 AD, the beginning of the mission of John the Baptist, and the last ‘day’ in 25 AD. The year 19 AD was not the end-point of week 69, just the beginning of week 70. Hence, in between the date of Jesus’ birth and the beginning of John’s public appearance there was a ‘holiday’ of 26 years. We do not know in which year King Cyrus promulgated the decree to rebuild the Temple, but it is certain that this was not in 465 BC (calculated back from 19 AD). We can safely assume that the Bible is correct and that the decree went out 483 years before the birth of Christ,<sup>28)</sup> perhaps one or two years less, since the mystical literature indicates (A.K. Emmerick) that his coming was moved forward thanks to Mary’s urgent prayers, to be discussed in the “Panin Bible Statistics”.

## 26 – *Everything was outright provocation*

It was believed in the intertestamentary times, as shown in the Slavonic version of Flavius Josephus, “*that the city of Jerusalem would stand 70 weeks and that after these*

---

28) Counting backwards from the date of Jesus’ birth, the end of the Babylonian Exile comes out at 488 BC [-8 – (69x7) +1 +2]. The correction of 1 is because of the first year that counts as a whole year; the correction of 2 is because of the Messiah’s birth being advanced by two years thanks to Mary’s prayers. See Appendix-6: “The Canonicity of the Book of Daniel” (p. 325), where an explanation is to be found as to why this book is included in the Biblical canon. It is therefore a prophetic book, permitting of this type of calculation.

years it would become desolate, and when they had counted the years, (they) were (four hundred) thirty four (62x7)". Thackeray notes: "*The debate in this quote is represented as taking place in the year of Herod's Arab campaign, that is to say in 32 BC.*" <sup>29)</sup> If we add the remainder until 490 years we reach 25 AD, being the last year of the 70 weeks! If we continue this train of thought, that no doubt was cultivated by the religious elite, it was feared that Jesus would abuse the opportunity of the Easter of his Crucifixion that happened to fall seven years after John had started to preach. Jesus refers to this preaching when a few days before his Crucifixion He defends his ministry, asking (Luke 20:2-3): "*The baptism of John was it from heaven or from men?*" The religious authorities must have feared that He would start a bloody insurrection under the pretext that the week of 'reconciliation' had ended and that now 'war and desolations' had arrived. This Passover was the supreme moment, for according to the Jewish chronology this fell on the 'dynastic' Rosh Ha-shana (New Year), marking the end of year 25 and the beginning of year 26. <sup>30)</sup> Did not Jesus have dynastic aspirations?

Everything Jesus did and said in the last week before his Crucifixion can be regarded as outright provocation. First there was his triumphal entry into the City seated on an ass's foal, and then they saw his violent cleansing of the Temple. These were his two most ostensible acts during his entrance in Jerusalem. The reference to Zechariah 9:9, where it is written: "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Behold your king is coming to you sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey*", was quite obvious to the scribes, for even dreaming about a donkey was seen as a sign of the Messianic Age. (B. Berachot 56b) (See Appendix-5: "Why, symbolically speaking, Jesus entered Jerusalem on an ass's foal"). In this way Jesus let it be known in a manner not subject to misunderstanding: "I am the Messiah!" This also fitted the usual interpretation of the deathbed prophecy, known to everyone, that the patriarch Jacob pronounced over his son Juda. In the Jewish tradition this refers to the verse from Zechariah, just quoted (Gen. Rabbah 99:8). Jacob's prophecy was as follows: "*The sceptre (which means the kingship) shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet (which ultimately means the capacity to pass the death sentence), until Shilo comes (which means the One Sent or the Messiah), and to Him shall be the obedience of the people. He binds his donkey to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine.*" At this stage Jesus showed no reluctance, as in the past, to make known his messianic aspirations.

By his conduct Jesus inflamed his enemies as if He were pleading: 'Crucify Me'. That is why Jesus came on earth: to do his Father's Will in order to bring salvation, and although we may charge the Jewish leaders with a 'de facto decide', yet it was not 'de jure', for if they had known who Christ was, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. (1 Cor. 2:8) <sup>31)</sup> This notion is found in "The Confession of Caiaphas" (p. 142):

«« While thus engaged, with no one in the room but my wife and Annas, her father, I (Caiaphas) lifted up my eyes, and behold Jesus of Nazareth stood before me. My breath stopped, my blood ran cold, and I was in the act of falling, when He spoke and said: "*Be not afraid, it is I. You condemned Me that you might go free. This is the work of my Father. Your only wrong is that you have a wicked heart. This you must repent of. This last lamb you have slain is the one that was ordained before the foundation (of the world) (1 Cor. 2:7). This sacrifice is made for all men. Your other lambs were for those who offered them. This is for all.*"

---

29) This conclusion and the quote are, inclusive the brackets, taken literally as it stands in Thackeray's translation.

30) The Mishna specifies five New Year's Days. The Rosh Ha-shana for such things as calendar years, known to all, falls on the first of Tishrei. That for royal years on first of Nissan. Then there are special initial days for tithes of animals, for the pilgrims and for the trees, the last three being subjects of rabbinical discussions.

*This is the last. It is for you if you'll accept it. I died that you and all humankind might be saved.* " »»»

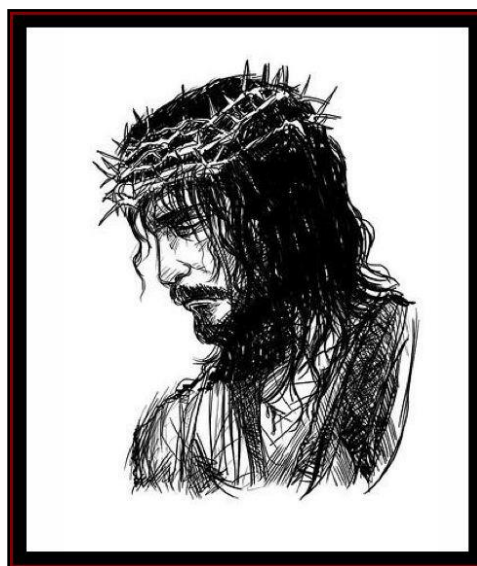
There is no question about it that the scribes – not so the common people – understood what He was hinting at in the second part of the saying when Jesus, speaking of the temple of his body (John 2:18-21), proclaimed: *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."* Sir, they said to Pilate after He had died (Mt. 27:63-64): *"We remember, while Jesus was still alive, how this impostor said: 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal Him, and tell the people: 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception would be worse than the first."*

-----

#### **Recommended literature:**

**H. St John Thackeray:** "Josephus (translation of Jewish War)", Loeb Classical Library - London # 1957. See also: "Josephus - The Man and the Historian", Hilda Stich Stooch Lectures - New York # 1929. (quote p. 34)

**Robert Eisler:** "The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist (according to Flavius Josephus' recently discovered 'Capture of Jerusalem' and other Jewish and Christian sources)", Methuen - London # 1931. (quote from ch. 6)



*Comix Creators, fecit Aug. 30, 2004*

31) Though the Jewish leadership is not to be held accountable for deicide, there is a specific fault that caused their blindness, which is that they were not the least interested in the question whether Jesus, the supposed son of Joseph, was the promised Messiah. If they had shown interest, they would have discovered that indeed He was. And they were not interested, because they were too much involved in power and ambition, for which they neglected human and divine laws. Therefore Jesus says: "They say and do not." And also, pointing at the sin of killing a great prophet, not that of the killing of the incarnated God: "You are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. (...) On you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar." (Mt. 23:3, 30-36)

It is true that with the denial by the Jewish leadership of the Messiah sent by Jahwe, Jahwe Himself was denied. At the same token it barred the way to their acceptance of the Holy Trinity, which dressed up a wall of separation between them and God, not only as to themselves but also as to the Jewish masses below them, and all those who followed in the ages ever since.

## 27 – *Guilty of death*

If the calculation described was widely accepted in those days, the announcement of the destruction of the Temple, the first part of the saying, must have been perceived by the priestly and scribal authorities as a thinly veiled threat, while being reminded of the verse of Daniel: *“The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself, and the people of the Prince, who is to come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary”*. The implication was that Jesus was threatening with destruction the very citadel of Israel’s faith. It is in this way that Caiaphas must have understood his own prophecy, uttered a few months earlier (John 11:49-50), not being aware that it was a prophecy: *“You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and the whole nation perish not”*. Of course, the Daniel prophecy does not point at Jerusalem but rather the city of the Strong One, of Satan who is prince of this city called World, and sanctuary does not mean the Temple building but his own body. This shows the galactic distance between the reality of Christ and how He was perceived. The saying *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”* became one of the main accusations when Jesus stood before the chief priests and Higher Sanhedrin, who wanted to put Him to death (Mt 26:59-66), but not even then did their testimony agree because some rose up and misquoted Jesus (Mk 14:57-64): *“We heard Him say, I will destroy this Temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.”* Here is shown, in accord with our analysis, that the second part of the saying was correctly understood, but that the first part was misunderstood in the literal sense. To this accusation Jesus answered, referring to Daniel 7:13: *“You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”*<sup>32)</sup> This was too much to bear, and then the High Priest Caiaphas tore his clothes as sign of dismay (by the way, ostentatious acts were strictly forbidden by the rules of law and made a verdict null and void). And in the heavy solemnity of the Court of Justice they all yelled in terrible tumult: *“He is deserving of death! To death! To death!”*

## 28 – *God’s righteousness and his pardon*

The assumed desire for vengeance on the part of a considerable proportion of Jewish society, as has been highlighted previously, could have served as a motive for the Crucifixion of Jesus. This conclusion might be contested because such does not appear in the doctrinal expositions of the Mishna, which is the predecessor to the Talmud.<sup>33)</sup> Never-

---

32) A striking comparison shows up with the narration of the stoning to death when, just before dying, the martyr Stephen saw the heavens opened with the Son of Man at the right hand of God. (Acts 7:56) In this case, just like with Christ, one of the main accusations consisted of the charge that he wanted to destroy the Temple. (Acts 6:14) Stephen, who was stoned to death because of his testimony (Acts 7), is regarded as the first Christian martyr.

33) The Talmud is a collection of books that has been a regular object of study, and still is, by a large section of Jewish faithful. Talmud means study, doctrine. The commentary on the Written Law or Torah (the first 5 volumes of the Bible) is the Oral Law, which goes back to Moses. In the second century AD, when many scribes were killed during the revolt, the need was felt to preserve the Oral Law in a well-organised compendium. This took form in 60 books and supplements (Tosaftot), written by Rabbi Judah the Nasi and his disciples, being called the de Mishna (quotation), books that are extremely difficult to read. The rabbinic discussions and commentaries that were given in reaction to the Mishna are called the Gemara - also difficult to read, subdivided in the Palestinian or Jerusalemite, conceived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and the much larger Babylonian conceived in the 5<sup>th</sup>; the Palestinian Gemara is much venerated but, unlike the Babylonian, rarely looked at. The Mishna and Gemara together make up the Talmud; the terms Gemara and Talmud are used interchangeably. Each rabbi who saw fit to comment has been recorded in the Babylonian Gemara and consequently not all of it is gold: it may be of iron or clay, much more so than with the Mishna and Palestinian Gemara.



theless the same period that we are interested in, is dealt with there and this was written down only a short time afterwards, that is to say around 200 years after Christ.

In my view the Jewish teachings, as expressed in the Mishna, appropriated what was considered honourable, thereby ignoring or, if possible, by ingeniously adapting that which did not tally, which would contradict the original multiformity belonging to the Jewish body of thought. The stunning disillusion after the bloody repression of the Bar Kochba Revolt made the Jews glad to bury the whole episode and to forget about the theological considerations that had played a part in it<sup>34)</sup> – as they also played a part in the sentencing of our Lord and Saviour. This explains why even the terrorist name of Bar Kochba was erased from the documents, a name that according to Numbers 24:17 points to God's terrible revenge, of course against the Romans. The verse goes as follows: *"A star shall come out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel who (acc. to Jer. 48:45) shall crush the forehead of Moab and destroy all the sons of tumult."* The Mishna knows him only as Bar Koziba or 'Son of a fool'.

A certain shame might have prevailed concerning their concept of a vengeful God seeking to destroy the heathen nations; if so, it would be a justifiable shame because the two complementary aspects of God, being righteous and merciful at the same time, have always been known to them: Amos's message portrays the inflexible righteousness of God, Hosea's his great forgiveness. These may not be separated, because God's involvement is in 'both' justice and mercy. In the warnings and pleadings of the prophets, in the prayers of the servants of God, in the hymns of praise, the righteousness and pardon of God, his justice and his gracious mercy, are ever-recurrent themes. In the Talmud God is represented as deliberating with Himself (Gen. Rabbah 12:15): *"If I create the world in My merciful character (alone), sins will abound; if in My just character (alone), how can the world endure? I will create it in both the just and the merciful character, and may it endure!"* It was known at the time, as expounded in Deuteronomy 28:63 and 2 Esdras 7:132-139,<sup>35)</sup> that God inflicts judgement where He has been abundant in loving-kindness, if it so happens that the people have strayed from his ways. And that He is gracious in his severity, if it so happens that people have turned in repentance to his laws, and this also applies to the goj (the Gentiles), but apparently most of the Jews in Jesus time did not grasp this elusive concept.

---

34) In 118 AD, when Roman Emperor Hadrian ascended to the throne, he sought to pacify the embittered Jewish masses by pledging to rebuild their holy city that had been destroyed during the great war of 66-70 and by holding out a vague promise to reconstruct the Temple itself. But it soon became clear that such promises conflicted with the Emperor's policy of achieving greater cultural homogeneity in his realm. After Hadrian had quenched the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 he decided to rebuild Jerusalem, not as a Jewish centre but as a Greek city, to be called *Ælia Capitolina* or Holy Capital, henceforth its official name.

35) Deuteronomy 28:63 and II Esdras 7:132-139 are at the end of this article. The quotation from Esdras is a paraphrase of Exodus 34:6-7, also quoted at the end.

II Esdras, also called the Revelation of III and IV Ezra, are writings hardly known today because they are not included in the current Bible editions. The older editions of the Vulgate, after the 12th century, usually appended them. In the famous Geneva Bible of 1560, with notes of Calvinistic flavour, it came to be known as the apocryphal 2 Esdras. The Geneva Bible is popularly known as the Breeches Bible after a typical translation of Genesis 3:7, but it is also known as the Pilgrims' Bible, because the American Pilgrims preferred it to the King James Version, first published in 1611. 2 Esdras, a book that is at least partially based on an oral tradition, was, as is now generally assumed, completed in the first century of our calendar. The visions it contains are attributed to the prophet Ez-ra, which does not mean that he himself put them into writing. This baraita or 'outside' is considered one of the high points of Jewish apocalyptic literature.

The Magna Carta of this historical pattern is depicted in Moses' last speech at the gates of the Promised Land, in which both the blessings and the curse are spoken in terms of the liturgical cycle of harvests. (Deut. 27-33) It is the one or the other: the blessings or the curses. Both liturgical cycles, the one of mourning and the one of joy, are each conditional but not precisely reciprocal, for the Lord is slow to anger and easy to forgive. It is easy to comprehend – and everyone does so understand – that God's blessings are conditional. But why then is it so difficult to understand that God's fulminations are also subject to that same conditionality? In the Book of Revelation, for instance, every curse can be read in a diametrically opposite way, and that will be translated into reality, provided that the conditions of penance and repentance are met.

An exception to the then current way of thinking was John the Baptist, of whom Jesus said that there had never been a greater saint than he, only to be surpassed in holiness by the saints in the Reign of Peace. (Mt. 11:11) John proclaimed a baptism for conversion and the remission of sins. He not only called for a national awakening because, in conformity with Isaiah 52:10, the whole of humanity should see God's salvation. But pity the hypocrites! Who has told you, cried John, that you will be able to escape the coming wrath? The name John means "God is mercy". He brought a message of mercy, but not without pointing out the other aspect of God's Love: his wrath or justice. His message witnesses to the correct theological insight. He was averse to the bloodthirsty rebelliousness of many of his contemporaries. He must have imagined that the people around him would convert en masse. When, inspired by the Holy Ghost, he pointed to Jesus, he said: "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.*" Sister Maria de Agreda tells that John the Baptist had always known that Jesus would die crucified, but that does not mean that he knew precisely what was to precede – nor, even less, that it would be his own people that would press the Roman governor to crucify Him. He could have focussed on the prophecy of Isaiah; that Jesus would proclaim the good tidings with the meekness of a lamb: (Is. 42:1-4, Mt. 12:18-21, Ps. 25:9)

«« Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delights. I have put my Spirit upon Him. He shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles. He shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. (...) The meek shall He guide in justice and teach his way. (...) A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench. He shall bring forth judgement unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgement in the earth. And in his Name the Gentiles shall wait. »»

I suspect he assumed that the great awakening would really take off after Jesus had started his mission, He who was to baptise with the Spirit and with fire. (Mt. 3:11) The fact that Jesus' mission started off as an apparent chain of failures – that he could not suspect and, even less, that from that his victory would arise. John did not completely miss the mark, as indeed it was the time of grace. Unfortunately, after Jesus' expiatory death, the Jewish nation did not seize the opportunity. Today, grace is offered again!

## **29 – *The Talmud gives insufficient insight into Jesus' times***

Although John the Baptist, like Jesus, was not entirely without success, the great mass of Judaism failed to be moved. I would now like to quote from the monumental work by George Foot Moore, entitled "Judaism", written with the encouragement of the great Talmud scholar Louis Ginzberg, first published in 1927:

«« The Jews (in the time of Jesus) would have been singularly unlike the rest of humankind if (...) they had not found a bitter satisfaction in calling to mind the prophecies of God's signal vengeance on the Babylonian destroyers, such as Isaiah 13 and Jeremiah 50 ff., with an application to the despots of their time, and

dwelt on the predictions of the doom of Edom (Rome) in Isaiah 34 plus 63:1-6 and Jeremiah 49:7-23.<sup>37)</sup> But, considering how much room the destruction of the heathen nations fills in the prophets and the fierce exultation over their fate that breathes in the prophecies, the vindictive aspect of God's dealing with the oppressors of his people is far from being as prominent in rabbinical utterances, even from that dreadful century, as we should expect. The same may be said of the first century apocalypses Esdras and the Syriac Baruch, which books reflect the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD; for the tragedy of Israel, which itself was but an act in the tragedy of mankind, ...vengeance was no solution. »» (2:2 ad finem)

Some may object to the presumed vindictiveness of a large part of the Jewish community in the intertestamentary time, which served as motivation for Jesus' Crucifixion, that such a conclusion does not clearly follow from the teachings known to us from the Mishna (= 'quotation'), that nonetheless refers to that same period and was conceived shortly thereafter, at the turn of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. In Sanhedrin 43a the rabbinical accusation levelled at Jesus does speak of stoning: *"He must be stoned because he has engaged in wizardry and has tempted Israel to dissidence. Let everyone who can say anything in his favour come forward and plead for him. Let everyone who knows where he is tell this to the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem."* The reference to stoning rather than crucifixion is believable here because He had not yet been arrested. If they had succeeded to have have it done without a trial and out of the presence of Romans, in what could have been termed a lynching by the general public, they would have been very pleased. (See Jn. 8:59; 10:31; 11:8)

The messianism in the new era after the Bar Kochba Revolt, that took hold after 138 AD, appears to concentrate more on a remote future, where the deliverer is seen on a celestial stage. Until that era the calculations were revised, each time when the events, often traumatic, failed to meet expectations. George Foot Moore says:

«« It is probable that similar corrected computations were made in the period of the Bar Kochba Revolt. After the calamitous issue of the insurrection had discredited its messiah, mistrust of all attempts to fix a date for (the involvement of) God and censure of those who tried it prevailed. »» (7:2)

It was now considered, and still is, that the messianic age is a long way off. There is a great deal that can be said say about messianic speculations, based on Talmudic sources, but it is of little use to review these because the main point I wish to make is that such speculations differ in important respects from what prevailed in Jesus' time.

### **30 – The Day of Vengeance**

Because the Mishna and Talmud are of little use, we have to look for other Jewish sources, in order to find confirmation of the belligerent messianism of the intertestamentary time, like the oldest part of the Sibylline Oracles, generally attributed to an Egyptian Jew writing circa 140 BC. This extra-Talmudic source supports the idea that the Talmud does

---

36) It is undeniable that the Bible contains a number of passages calling for violence, but this was always justified when used against peoples who behaved in the most horrible ways, where human sacrifice was considered normal. For instance: Abraham would never have been willing to sacrifice his son Isaac if such practices were not current in local practice. Otherwise he would have known that God desired no human sacrifices. The story of Isaac – who in the end was not sacrificed but replaced by a goat – is therefore known in Hebrew as the Aqedat Yitzchaq: the binding of Isaac. It is not called "the sacrifice of Isaac" even though it was based on a clear willingness to be sacrificed, for Isaac, then 36 years old, offered himself voluntarily, just like our Saviour Jesus Christ.



not give a complete account of the religious thinking of the day, which is a kind of thinking that in 'our world' has always persisted.<sup>38)</sup> In it we read: (Sib. 3:46-50)

«« When Rome rules also over Egypt, (...) then the most mighty kingdom of the immortal King will appear to men. There will come a holy ruler to wield the sceptre over the whole earth unto all the cycles of swift-rushing time. Then will be, inexorable, the wrath on Roman men. (...) Woe to thee, wretched city! When will that day come of the judgement of the immortal God, the great King? »»

In the Sibylline Oracles 5:414, a part which is also of Jewish origin, but written at a later period than chapter 3, we read: *"There came from the wide heavenly spaces a blessed man, holding in his hands a sceptre which God put in his grasp, and he brought all into subjection."* This, of course, is an allusion to both Daniel 7:13 and Psalm 2:8-9. In 2 Esdras 12:31-34 a similar view is depicted:<sup>37)</sup>

«« The Messiah, whom the Most High has kept until the end of days, will spring from the race of David, and will come (...) First He will set them (the rulers) alive before the bar of judgement, and when He has accused them, will annihilate them. But the remnant of my people He will mercifully deliver. »»



*There was continuous unrest during the Roman occupation of Israel*

I also like to point out the vindictiveness of the Qumran War Scroll (20 pages of fine script), already quoted from, that is sprinkled with phrases like this:

«« Crush the heathens, Your adversaries, and may Your sword devour guilty flesh. (And also:) The outstretched hand of God is upon all the Gentiles. They shall not prevail. The kingship is for God almighty and salvation is for his people. »»

From Qumran we are acquainted with the "Charter for the Yahad", formerly known as the 'Community Rule' or as the 'Charter of a Jewish Sectarian Association'. In the part that deals with the coming Messiah, king and priest, the following is written:

«« These are the precepts of the Way for the Instructor in these times, as to his loving and hating: eternal hatred and a concealing spirit for the Men of the Pit! He shall leave them (the Jews) their wealth and profit like a slave does his master –

---

37) With regard to the horrors that peoples can commit and God's reaction, see my article "The Conquest of Mexico". Sometimes a comparison is drawn between the Koran and the Bible as concerns the call to violence, but the comparison does not hold water. What happens if we apply "do unto others as you would be done by" to political Islam? What if all of the hurtful, hateful and harmful duality and submission disappear from the Islamic writings? What is amazing is how much of the Islamic doctrine goes away. About 61% of the Koran disappears. The Sura loses 75% of its words and 20% of the Hadith vanishes. And those figures are low. All of the abusive words about women would also disappear. So the above reductions would be even bigger. Taken from Newsletter "The Political Islam", Jan. 10, 2008, under "The Golden Rule in Islam".

presently humble before his oppressor, but a zealot for God's law whose time will come: even the Day of Vengeance. He shall work God's will when he attacks the wicked and exercise authority as He has commanded, so that He is pleased with all that is done, as with a freewill offering. »»

The translators convincingly argue that the Yahad texts do not merely reflect a small community living in Qumran.<sup>39)</sup> The work itself, they say, refers to various groups or chapters scattered throughout Palestine, to be compared with charters from elsewhere in the contemporary Greco-Roman world; virtually every structural element of this ancient Jewish writing has analogues in the charters of guilds and religious associations in Egypt, Greece and Asia Minor; as the work describes it, the Yahad or unity – or, if you like: association – is made up of priests, Levites (a secondary priestly order), 'Israel', and Gentile proselytes; in this context Israel means not the generality of Jews, but only those who accept the teachings of the group; other Jews, along with the surrounding Gentile nations, are considered "*Men of Perversity*" who "*walk in the wicked way*".



### 31 – Terrorism, even today

The two aspects of Jahweh-Elohim's character, justice and forgiveness, are again in the news thanks to the rise of international terrorism that spares nothing and nobody. On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2002, during the gathering known as the "Decalogue of Assisi for Peace", an initiative of Pope John-Paul II, 220 religious representatives from about fifty churches and religions gathered in order to pray together, on the basis of the pedagogy of justice and forgiveness, and to have the world hear a clear statement, subscribed by everyone, that it is blasphemous to call oneself a terrorist in the name of God and to attack innocent people who have nothing to do with the original aims; killing people deliberately in one or other random category or through coincidental circumstance militates against human dignity and is a gross insult to the God who created man in his own image and knows each one of us personally. (Gen. 1:27, Ps. 139, 147:4) Prior to the Assisi gathering, during the celebration of the World Day of Peace on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2002, the Pope laid out his ideas on peace in the context of terrorism, many ideas fitting extremely well with that which we confront in our essay. I would therefore like to close with a quotation from the Pope's address:

«« I have often paused to reflect on the persistent question: How do we restore the moral and social order subjected to such horrific violence? My reasoned conviction, confirmed in turn by Biblical Revelation, is that the shattered

---

38) See the introductory remarks from the English translation of Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr, and Edward Cook in "The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation", HarperCollins - New York # 1996 (fragments 1QS, 4Q255-264a, 5Q11 ≈ 9:21-24).

order cannot be fully restored except by a response that combines justice with forgiveness. The pillars of true peace are justice <sup>39)</sup> and that form of love which is forgiveness.

But in the present circumstances, how can we speak of justice and forgiveness as the source and condition of peace? We can and we must, no matter how difficult this may be, a difficulty which often comes from thinking that justice and forgiveness are irreconcilable. But forgiveness is the opposite of resentment and revenge, not of justice. In fact, true peace is *“the work of justice”* (Is. 32:17). As the Second Vatican Council put it, peace is *“the fruit of that right ordering of things with which the divine founder has invested human society and which must be actualized by man thirsting for an ever more perfect reign of justice”* (Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* 78). For more than fifteen hundred years, the Catholic Church has repeated the teaching of Saint Augustine of Hippo on this point. He reminds us that the peace which can and must be built in this world is the peace of right order – *tranquillitas ordinis*, the tranquillity of order (cf. *“De Civitate Dei”* 19:13, or *“The City of God”*, a book written by Augustin).

(...) The World Day of Peace this year offers all humanity, and particularly the leaders of nations, the opportunity to reflect upon the demands of justice and the call to forgiveness in the face of the grave problems which continue to afflict the world, not the least of which is the new level of violence introduced by organised terrorism.

It is precisely peace born of justice and forgiveness that is under assault today by international terrorism. (...) It is a profanation of religion to declare oneself a terrorist in the name of God, to do violence to others in his name. Terrorist violence is a contradiction of faith in God, the Creator of Man, who cares for man and loves him. It is altogether contrary to faith in Christ the Lord, who taught his disciples to pray: *“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”*. (Mt. 6:12) »»

Ad finem

---

### Recommended literature:

**George Foot Moore:** *“Judaism (In the first centuries of the Christian era: the Age of Tannaim)”* – Hendrickson Publ. (by arrangement with Harvard University Press), Peabody, U.S.A. # 1997 (reprint), 1927 (3 vol.). Quote 2:2 ad finem, and 7:2.

---



---

<sup>39)</sup> See Appendix-7 for a presentation under the theme of “Justice and Peace”.

## --- Behold, the Lord comes with Fierce Anger ---

**Deuteronomy 28:63:** “Just like Yahweh rejoiced to do you good and multiply you, so He will rejoice to destroy you and bring you to nothing.”

**Exodus 34:6-7:** “And Yahweh passed before him [Moses] and proclaimed: ‘Yahweh! Yahweh is merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands of generations, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and grandchildren up to the third and the fourth generation.’ ”

**2 Esdras 7:132-139 (the 7 attributes of God’s goodness):** “I know, O Lord, that the Most High is now called ‘*merciful*’, because He has mercy on those who have not yet come into the world; and ‘*gracious*’, because He is gracious to those who turn in repentance to his law; and ‘*long-suffering*’, because He shows patience toward those who have sinned against his works; and ‘*bountiful*’, because He rather giveth than taketh away; and ‘*compassionate*’, because He makes his compassions abound more and more to those now living and to those who are gone and to those yet to come, for if He did not make them abound, the world would not continue with them that inherit therein; and He is called ‘*the giver*’, because if He did not give out of his goodness so that those who have committed iniquities might be relieved of them, not one ten-thousandth of humankind should remain living; and ‘*the judge*’, because if he did not pardon those who were created by his Word and blot out the multitude of their sins, there would be left only very few of the innumerable multitude.”

**Isaiah 13:6-9:** “Wail, for the day of Yahweh is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore all hands will be limp, every man’s heart will melt. (...) They will be amazed at one another, their faces will be like flames. Behold, the day of Yahweh comes, cruel with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate and to destroy its sinners.” (Comp. to **Is. 13:19**) “Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans’ pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.”

**Jeremiah 50:1-4:** “This word the prophet Jeremiah spoke against Babylon and the land of the Chaldeans. Declare among the nations, proclaim and set up a standard; proclaim, do not conceal it; say: Babylon is taken, Bel is shamed. Merodach is broken in pieces. Her idols are humiliated. Her images are broken in pieces. For out of the north a nation comes up against her, which shall make her land desolate, and no one shall dwell therein. They shall move, they shall depart, both man and beast. In those days and in that time, says Yahweh, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, with continual weeping they shall come and seek Yahweh their God.”

**Isaiah 34:5-8:** “My sword shall be bathed in heaven. Indeed it shall come down on Edom and on the people of my curse for judgement. The sword of Yahweh is filled with blood, it is made overflowing with fatness, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. Yahweh has a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. The wild oxen shall come down with them, and the young bulls with the mighty bulls. Their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust saturated with fatness. For it is the day of Yahweh’s vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion.”

**Isaiah 63:1-6:** “Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah. (...) Why is Your apparel red? (...) I have trodden them in my anger and trampled them in my fury. Their blood is sprinkled upon my garments and I have stained all my robes. (...) I have trodden down the peoples in my anger and crushed them in my fury, and brought down their blood on the earth.”

**Jeremiah 49:7-23:** “...I will bring calamity upon Esau, when the time of punishment has come. (...) I myself will make Esau bare. (...) Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse. (...) An ambassador has been sent to the nations: “Gather together, come against her, and rise up to battle!” (...) The earth shakes at the noise of their fall - at the cry its noise is heard at the Red Sea. (...) In that day the heart of the mighty men of Edom shall be like the heart of a woman in travail.”

## APPENDIX 5

### Why, symbolically speaking, Jesus entered Jerusalem on an ass's foal

It is written in Zechariah 9:9, which applies to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem: "*Behold your king is coming to you. Lowly and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.*" The Hebrew for donkey can be seen as an image of the descent into hell, because 'chamor' for donkey indicates a religiously impure animal. It is written in the same way as 'chamar' for bitumen (the vowels are absent in the original script). The dull greyish colour of a donkey recalls the colour of bitumen, for which the Hebrew carries a range of meanings, such as slime pit, to glow, to befoul and to get into trouble. It also refers to 'kippur', the Hebrew for reconciliation and atonement, which is related to 'smearing with pitch'. It is of particular interest that atonement in Hebrew is a primary root 'kaphar' (the plural is kippur, as in Yom Kippur), which means to cover, specifically with bitumen. The expression *chamar* is found in Genesis 6:14 when God instructs Noah to make the Ark and to cover it inside and outside with pitch. The Ark, vehicle of salvation, must have been of the same dull greyish appearance as the donkey. The symbolism is clear: Christ was travelling the evil road to atonement. He was to become the incorporation of evil for our sake.

The Kabbalists (Jewish mystics) argue that the Christian belief contains the same paradox of the evil that brings forth good, for they say: "*Was not their Christian Messiah ugly and crushed, which is so pointedly portrayed in Isaiah 53?*" While perfection in the flesh is unattainable, they continue, the choice had to fall on the Jehoshua riding on the donkey. Verily, the perfection in the flesh is unattainable, except for Jesus, Son of God, who in his descent came to present a pleasing sacrifice to God, also offering reconciliation for the tribe of Judah, the tribe who through all the ages was the pre-destined agent for this awful descent, which Jesus had to walk. Is not it written in Jacob's testament: "*Judah binds his donkey to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine. He washes his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes.*" (Gen. 49:11)

This passage from Genesis was traditionally associated with Jesus, because He says of Himself (John 15:1): "*I am the true vine*". In "Ancient Christian Commentaries on Scripture" (ACCS) Ambrose is quoted as referring back the expression "*He washes his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes*" to Isaiah 49 (esp. verses 18 and 22). He writes:

«« In the passion of his body He washed the nations with his blood. Truly (he concludes), the mantle represents the nations, as it is written: "*You shall clothe Yourself with them all as with an ornament*", and elsewhere (Ps. 102:27): "*Like a cloak You will change them and they will be transformed.*" »»

This agrees with Rufinus (again ACCS) who explains Jesus entrance as follows:

«« The foal is the crowd of nations, unto whom surely the burden of the law had never been imposed and among whom no one but He had ever held the first position. His ass's foal are those, who coming from the first people, symbolized here by the she-ass, were elected for salvation and about whom the prophet says (Is. 10:22): "*Though your sons, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.*" After rejecting the she-ass who preferred to wear the yoke of the law in its infidelity, the foal born from it is elected, that is, a new people coming from the old one through faith is adopted and joined to the nation of the nations (...) in order to become joint heirs with Christ. »»

-----



## APPENDIX 6

## The Canonicity of the Book of Daniel

*This article is intended as a contribution to the discussion of the canonicity of the Old Testament Book of Daniel – whether or not it belongs in the recognised writings forming the Bible – something that is currently severely doubted by Christian scholars, unjustifiably in my opinion.*



*Sistine Chappel: the Prophet Daniel (by Michelangelo)*

The Jewish way of thinking in the days of Christ, was bent on the interpretation of Daniel 9:24-26. In “The Expectation of the Jews” a comment is given on these verses:

«« There was a time specified in the Book of Daniel of seventy weeks, which was to intervene between the building of the Second Temple and the ‘times’ (plural) of the Messiah, which interpreting according to the prophetic style, a day for a year, would bring the period of his appearance somewhere near the time when John the Baptist began to preach. Daniel reads: “*Seventy weeks are determined for your people to finish the transgression (from the command to build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince shall be seven plus sixty-two [69] weeks).*” »»

And thus serious consideration was given at the time to the fact that the appearance of the precursor (John the Baptist) would be 483 years [69x7] after the beginning of the reconstruction of the Temple following the decree by King Cyrus. The date of that decree will probably not have been a complete certainty. In relation to the messianic claims of Jesus’ mission and his sensational miracles, his contemporaries must have considered the start of John’s mission a moment of great importance. They must have come to the conclusion that this occurred just after the end of Daniel’s 69 weeks.

We also learn, this time from the writings of the visionary Maria Valtorta (1897-1961), that when Jesus talked with the scribes during his Temple visit when only twelve years old, that the calculations by the scribes pointed at the birth of the Messiah to have happened ten years earlier (not twelve, but ten). Since, in their view, nothing had happened, they revised their calculations, and this time the calculations were pointing at the beginning of the mission of John the Baptist, assuming that both missions belong together.

The above reasoning stands or falls by the assumed canonicity of the Book of Daniel. The Roman Catholic Church's position has always been that this book belongs in the Canon, i.e. is directly inspired by God, an opinion based among other things on Jesus' reference to Daniel 9:27 in Mathew 24:15. Those who support a different view, perhaps fail to realise that the Jews began to contest the canonicity of Daniel only after the Crucifixion, because it all too clearly shows in the passages in 9:24-26 that the Jesus whom they crucified was the Messiah. The Book of Daniel gave an argument to say: "Yes indeed, the 'son of the carpenter' arrived exactly at the date prophecised. And thus He must have been the Messiah." The book was a thorn in the flesh of the enemies of Christ and it therefore had to be discredited. The Book of Daniel had to be dismissed, it couldn't be otherwise, because as the Lémann twins said in an open letter published in the newspaper "Le Courrier de Lyon", on September 17<sup>th</sup> 1854, after their sensational conversion from the Jewish faith to Catholicism:

«« And so we told ourselves: "If the Messiah has come, it is Jesus Christ, and so we ought to become Christians. If He has not, we ought not even remain Jews, since the time of promise is past, and [thus] our books have lied to us". »»

The secularisation of Daniel fits into the Jewish policy of wiping the slate clean, and the man who played a major part in this effort was the great scriptural scholar Jonathan ben Uzziel, a member of the Sanhedrin that condemned our Saviour. The same man also decided to remove the chapter on the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53) from the Haftorahs or public readings of the scriptures, a custom that still prevails. The Talmud tells that an angel appeared to Jonathan to warn him that the way in which the prophet speaks of the Messiah here indicates Jesus of Nazareth too clearly.<sup>40)</sup>

In order to demonstrate the secular character of the Book of Daniel reference is usually made to the Talmud – in this case, therefore, an unreliable source – that suggests that the book was written by the Men of the Great Synagogue, therefore after the return from exile up to Alexander the Great (5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC), but little if anything is known of Jewish history in that period and everyone can say of it whatever he wishes. The modern opinion prevailing amongst Jewish and Christian scholars is that the Book of Daniel was written in about 165 BC in order to give the Jews courage during the savage persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC). This latter opinion is based on the consideration that the section from Chapter 2:4 up to and including 7:28 was written in Aramaic, with the use of a few terms borrowed from the Greek. But this does not prove that it was first written in Aramaic: only that this section has come down to us in that form. And then the same gentlemen state that there are a number of exegetical considerations that are alleged not to fit in with the generally current religious opinions during the period of exile. However prophets generally take little notice of current trends; moved by God, they see visions and write down words of which they themselves understand only the half – if at all – realising that they are not prophesying just for themselves but also for future generations. This without doubt applies to the prophet Daniel.

Finally, with regard to the so-called historical incompatibilities, these refer to assumed and not factual incompatibilities, which soon becomes clear even on a cursory reading of the history of the Neo-Babylonians and of the subsequent Persian Empire. It turns out that little is known of this with any certainty, especially with regard to the chronology employed.

-----

---

40) See: "Valeur de l'Assemblée qui prononça la peine de mort contre Jésus-Christ" (Status of the Assembly that pronounced the death sentence on Jesus Christ), 1877, by Mgr. Augustin Lémann and Mgr. Joseph Lémann - Fils d'Israël / Prêtres de Jésus Christ # reprinted in 1975 by the Socii Sancti Michaelis, Gent, Belgium (p. 31).

## APPENDIX 7

## « Justice and Peace »



Isaiah Scroll (1QIsaa) Written in Hebrew - Qumran, Cave 1. Ca. 120 BCE Parchment  
© Photo The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

**TEL AVIV** - On the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the State of Israel, the Israel Museum presented two major sections of the Great Isaiah Scroll – the most complete Biblical Dead Sea Scroll ever found and one of the world’s greatest archaeological treasures – in a special installation in the “Shrine of the Book”. For the first time in over 40 years the public had the opportunity to view the longest sections of the Scroll, featuring Isaiah’s celebrated and timeless message of peace stated in chapter 2: ***“They shall beat their swords into plowshares”***. Swords into Plowshares presents the longest sections of the scroll: a 260 cm-long section comprising chapters 1 to 28, and a 238 cm-long section comprising chapters 44 to 66. The scroll and its message of peace were on view at the Museum from May 19 through August 30, 2008.

### 33 – Introduction

On 17<sup>th</sup> April 2002, as guest of “Christenen in Brugge 2002” (Christians in Bruges 2002), Cardinal Jan Schotte (1925-2005) gave a speech in the context of Bruges as Cultural Capital of Europe. Cardinal Schotte was a well-known personality, resident in Rome, where for 19 years he was responsible for the organisation of the extraordinary synods of bishops. He was also president of staffing matters in the Vatican and a judge with the courts of cassation of the Catholic Church and of Vatican City.

His speech was given against the background of the occupation of the complex of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the bitter sequel to an escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The occupation was a previously unknown and dramatic violation of the centuries-old custom of mutual respect between the belief groups going back as far as the Ottoman Empire. At the time there were 250 people in the complex, the majority being armed Palestinians, with 30 Franciscans, 4 Franciscan nuns, 5 Greek Orthodox and 9 Armenian Orthodox monks. Terrorism, Schotte stated to his audience, must always be



condemned since no-one can condone terrorism in any form. There are no grounds for terrorism: from an adder's brood no peace can come! But a condemnation of this kind 'must' be uttered without losing sight of any unjust circumstances and oppressive humiliations suffered by the people from which that terrorism springs.

It should be stressed that there are many peoples and individuals on earth suffering from horrible oppression and injustices without breaking out into heinous acts against their fellow men. The one does not explain the other. Hatred can spring up anywhere and is the prevalent condition of humankind from which it should try to liberate itself. And here we are talking about the ways of getting there.

### ***34 – Our cultural heritage has been trapped***

In the past, Cardinal Schotte was for five years Secretary and Vice-Chairman of the Papal Commission "Iustitia et Pax" (for Justice and Peace). Thus he knew what he was talking about. His speech began as follows:

«« The true treasure of Europe lies in its patrimony of Christian principles. That is what enriches us, what binds us together in Europe, much more so even than geography. At present the Christian patrimony of Europe is being questioned. We only have to think about the discussions surrounding the drawing up of a European Constitution. Two days ago, in Rome, the Vice-Chairman of the group charged with drawing up the constitution promised to do his best to include the cultural patrimony of Christian origin in the constitution. But he was unable to make a firm promise in that regard. (In the end, the principle of the defence of our Christian heritage was not given a place in the drafting of the European Constitution.)<sup>41)</sup>

The values of our Christian patrimony are being questioned, for a variety of reasons. Thus, for instance, secularisation is making swift progress, secularisation which, in an age of apparently unlimited technological progress, finds many of our historically-based values superfluous or which pretends that technology and science must be allowed to solve all the problems that we humans are having to confront. In a certain sense we have reached the point where a new edition or a reprint of rationalism is required, that system of thought that sets Man up as the only criterion of our entire existence. We too, Christians and Catholics, are living under the pressure of this culture shift. »»

### ***35 – The equality between people is not on center stage***

Then the Cardinal delved into the meaning of the concept of justice and peace, so beautifully expressed in Psalm 85:11: "*I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace. (...) Mercy and truth meet each other; justice and peace kiss each other.*" The God of the Covenant is a God of peace, whose benevolence as expression of his graciousness begs for peace against the truth that requires justice as an expression of God's supreme righteousness and judgement. This ultimate good, called peace, has been promised to us on different levels: as the inner good of our conscious, as the good that permeates our human communities, and finally as a social and international good in the relations that exist within and between the nations. Because of this ideal condition, once

---

41) The European Constitution was rejected in 2005 after various national referenda. Turnout for the referendum on a European constitution was high, as was the margin of defeat for a measure pushed by the governing elite. "There is no longer a constitution", commented Philippe de Villiers, leader of the "Le Mouvement pour la France" (The movement for France), a party that had warned that France would suffer if the European Union continued to expand its borders for such countries as Islamic Turkey.

to be accomplished in the Reign of Peace, the term justice appears three times in the last four verses of this Psalm. That points at the state of absolute sinlessness of our Redeemer and King, that is meant to be part also of his beloved companions.

Seen differently, both twin concepts 'mercy & truth' and 'justice & peace' can each be considered as one entity. The twin concept mercy and truth is found again in John 1:17: *"The law was given by Moses, mercy and truth came (to this) by Jesus Christ."* This is no antithesis as some would like to see it, as if truth stands against the Jewish system of law (de Torah). Indeed, as Ilana Mercer stated: *"The Jewish perspective pivots on the 'passion for justice', wrote my father Rabbi Ben Isaacson in the International Jewish Encyclopedia. Justice always precedes and is a prerequisite for mercy (...); mercy without justice is no mercy at all."* Schotte continued:

«« 'Justice and Peace' is what is known in Latin as a binomium, a double term: a concept consisting of two components. This particular binomium is derived from the prophecy of Zechariah, 9:9-10: *"Tell the daughter of Sion: Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. (...) He shall speak peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."* And yet in the Middle Ages, and even long afterwards, justice and peace were mainly seen as separate entities. This can be seen in various tracts written by the Church's moral theologians. But by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we can say with certainty that the undeniable relationship between 'justice and peace' has been more and more accepted, something that can be seen in Church doctrine on the subject. In the tradition of Catholic morals we find principles related to personal justice, of distributive justice in our relationships with others, and also in relationship to international justice as regards the relationships between countries.

(...) That link between justice and peace in the relationships between different countries is now very generally accepted. It was clearly stated by Benedict XV after the First World War after the establishment of the League of Nations. Pius XII had as his motto: *"Opus Iustitiae Pax"*: Peace is the work of Justice. Under Pope John XXIII the connection was given strong emphasis and from Paul VI we have the expression *"development is the new name for peace"*. »»

A certain tension built up from the present emphasis on the equality principle as the *conditio sine qua non* for equitable living conditions. However, it is obvious that in Biblical ethics the equality principle between people is not on the forefront; on the contrary, because a human society can only fulfill its calling in 'grace' and 'justice' in permanent interaction with 'truth' and 'peace'. In this sense a person is 'equal' – but not 'identical', **something that cannot be found in the dealings of nature. It is neither the result of intelligent thinking, but it can only thrive by exploitation of the Love of God.** The human status is not measured by being equal or unequal or in function of utility. A human is not made for its own sake, but he is a social creature meant to be in a relation to God and to one another. In Biblical perspective it is the relation that is on center stage, not the autonomy of the individual or some kind of economic gain. That explains why in the Christian approach it is not the individual that counts, but the relation to his fellow being. In the Jewish-Christian culture it is not the autonomous man, but the conscientious man that takes the lead.

William Bilderdijk (1756-1831), the Dutch leading man of the Réveil (French for revival or awakening), was one of the first who claimed that the revolutionary equality principle, from which evolved 'having right to something', would result in an ever greater inequality in our modern democracies, with a gradual fading away of the sense of duty. Typical for the focus of attention as to the human rights issue, is the absence of the word 'duty' in the French revolutionary constitution from 1791, with its subsequent removal

from all new constitutions, also here in the Netherlands and Belgium. Not surprisingly, because duties are very unpopular, and as concerns a sense of duty people happen to be very unequal! <sup>42)</sup>

Schotte also stated the following. Within the Church the binomium has become a single concept; justice and peace now always go hand in hand. This has also happened in the world of international politics. When the United Nations was established in 1945, the link was laid from start with the establishment of the Security Council, where political matters are dealt with in relation to security in peace in the various nations, and with the founding of the Economic and Social Council that was set up to deal with problems of justice. The same combination – justice and peace, peace and justice – has been set as the basic principle in the other bodies of the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation, dealing with problems in the field of work, and the International Atomic Energy Agency, where security is sought with regard to nuclear energy.

Finally I would like to draw your attention to a third binomium, that of righteousness or charity and a fair verdict. *“I will make justice the measuring stick and a fair verdict to the plummet”* the Lord declares through his prophet. (Is. 28:17) Abraham was chosen to teach his posterity *“to do charity and judgment”* (Gen. 18:19), because we all make judgments all the time. *“God desires charity and a proper verdict”* (Ps. 33:5), *“which is even more so acceptable than sacrifice.”* (Prov. 21:3) His throne is founded upon them, for it is written in Psalm 97:2: *“Charity and a proper verdict (also in one’s commercial dealings) are the foundation of his throne.”* When the Queen of Sheba met King Solomon she exclaimed: *“Blessed be the Lord your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel, because the Lord loves Israel forever. Therefore He made you a king in order to act justly and fairly.”* (1 Kings 10:9) It reverts to the concept of the Hebrew ‘ona’ah’ expounded in Leviticus 25:17, which essentially refers to the proper balance of giving and taking in which I myself and my commercial counterpart are dealt with with the same measuring stick: *“Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the Lord your God.”* As stated in Proverbs 20:10: *“Differing weights and differing measures, both of them are abominable to the Lord.”*

### 36 – Conclusion

Today the binomia ‘justice & peace, ‘righteousness & fairness’ and ‘mercy & truth’ have entered the collective conscience. These twin concepts have become inseparable and the meanings of the words became intertwined. And for us, believers, this ought to become a part of our thought processes, and that despite the fact that in today’s world we can observe everywhere a situation in which a lack of peace and the presence of injustice prevail, as well as a lack of righteousness and the presence of lawlessness, and a lack of mercy and the presence of trickery. This presents the Church with the challenge to present the message of the Gospel by way of contrast. In the difficult and apparently impossible task of turning the current situation into one of righteousness, peace and mercy we can find solid ground in the text from Zechariah 9 already quoted. The same text is repeated in the Gospel of Matthew at the glorious entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Then, as now, the world was branded and shocked by a lack of peace, righteousness and mercy, and the presence everywhere of terrible injustice, lawlessness and trickery.

[The complete speech was published in the Bruges Diocesan Newsletter – Ministrando 38-6, here reproduced in part with a number of important amendments.]

---

<sup>42)</sup> Source: “De missie van een genie – de spirituele wereld van orangist Willem Bilderdijk” (The mission of a genius – the spiritual world of Orangist William Bilderdijk) by Bert Engelfriet – Buijten & Schipperheijn, Amsterdam # 2010 (p. 53).

# PART III

## ARTICLES ON QUESTIONS OF CHRONOLOGY

### THE SUN MIRACLE

§ 01 – Let the shadow go ten steps backwards	p. 295
§ 02 – The fractal principle	p. 296
§ 03 – The meaning of the calendars of Israel	p. 297
§ 04 – Worlds in collision	p. 298
§ 05 – A new liturgical calendar	p. 298
§ 06 – Adaptations in the Holy Scripture	p. 298
§ 07 – The takkanot: from Johanan to Juddua	p. 299
§ 08 – The Samaritan opposition	p. 300
§ 09 – A new critical edition of the Samaritan Torah	p. 302
§ 10 – The Assyrian troubles	p. 302
§ 11 – Hezekiah sick and near death	p. 303
§ 12 – God's judgement	p. 304
§ 13 – God listens to prayer	p. 305
§ 14 – Manasse, the greatest sinner ever	p. 305
§ 15 – What happened in Josia's 18 <sup>th</sup> year?	p. 306
§ 16 – God tests the heart	p. 307
§ 17 – Israel has forsaken its missionary duty	p. 308
§ 18 – The last scene	p. 309

### SUKKOTH AND THE EQUINOX

§ 19 – Historical considerations	p. 317
§ 20 – The link between Sukkoth and the Festival of the Cross	p. 318
§ 21 – A people that had to come to terms with its traumas	p. 319
§ 22 – Not the sun, but the earth's axis of rotation tilted	p. 319
§ 23 – A complicated matter	p. 319
§ 24 – Shall the shadow go forward ten degrees or backward?	p. 321
§ 25 – What about Joshua's battle?	p. 321

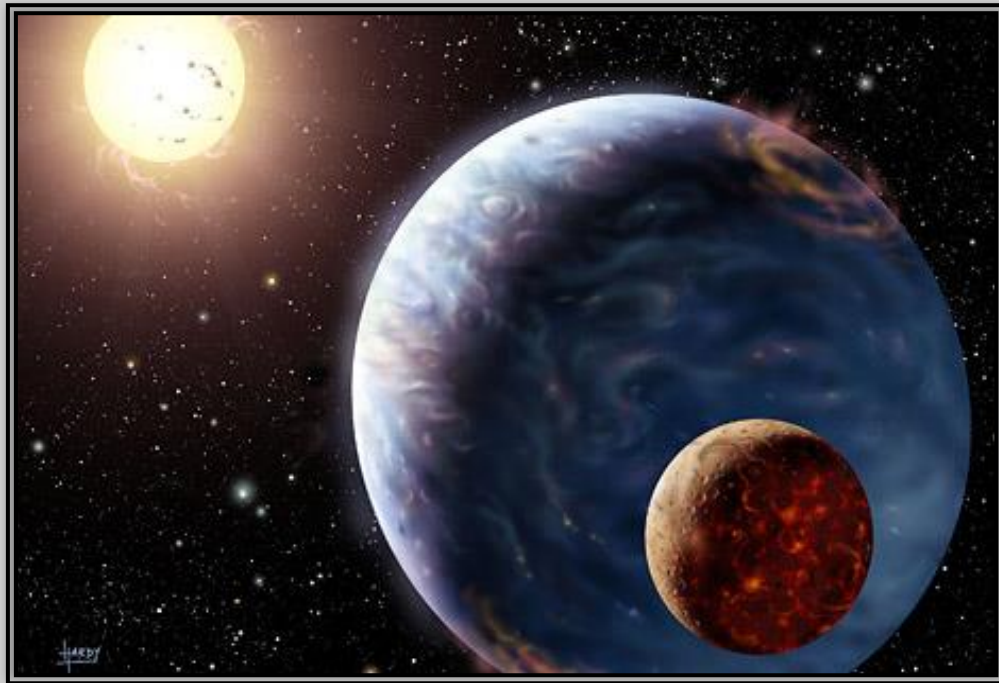
### CHANUKAH, ITS ORIGIN AND PLACE IN THE FESTIVE CALENDAR OF ISRAEL

p. 324

### THE PANIN BIBLE STATISTICS (PBS)

§ 26 – The discovery of the PBS by Panin	p. 329
§ 27 – An illustration of the methodology – the ancestry question	p. 330
§ 28 – Why the PBS has never been given the prominence it deserves	p. 333
§ 29 – The original as it exists in the Mind of God	p. 333
§ 30 – A correction to the Panin Bible Chronology	p. 335
— Appendix-8: How long did the Israelites stay in Egypt?	p. 337

# *The Sun Miracle*



The miracle of the Ahaz Sundial during the 14<sup>th</sup> year of King Hezekiah and the frightful-fearful days during King Josiah's 18<sup>th</sup> year.

*It is typical that New Year's Day, on the first day of Tishrei, is also known as the Day of Judgement. The first and the tenth day of the month of Tishrei developed into official days of repentance and also, in the course of time, became known in the synagogue as the Yamim Nora'im, the frightful-fearful days with, in between, an intermezzo of peace. This we read in the Jewish Encyclopædia Judaica (1972-92). Why those days were so fearful is not known. Perhaps it will have become more reasonable to the reader after having read this article. I do not claim to have had the last word on this matter.*

*Most theologians do not realise what happened to Israel's festive calendar after the return from Babylon. It is quite simple. Nobody knows what to think about the liturgical changes that took place in the post-Exilic period. Anything that does not fit into the scheme of things goes unobserved. To mention an example: What was David's greatest sin – leaving aside his sin of adultery with Bathsheba? I seldom get the right answer. The correct answer is: he held a census. There's a puzzle for you! (55) That was the greatest blunder of his regime. In the wake of this course of action, which was done to the great displeasure of his ministers, an exceptional divine punishment was meted out to the country by means of the 'angel of death', as recorded in 2 Samuel 24.*

## *1 – Let the shadow go ten steps backwards*

King Ahaz, Hezekiah's father, had a sundial built that was sensational for his time, now almost three thousand years ago. The Wycliffe Bible Dictionary states that the Sundial of Ahaz consisted possibly of twin flights of stone stairs, leading to the roof of the royal palace, one facing east and the other west, with a low wall bordering each flight. The Septuagint, which is the oldest Bible translation from Hebrew into Greek and dates from

the third to the second century BC, favours this interpretation by its use of the word (ana)bathmous, meaning steps. As the morning sun rose higher, the shadow traveled down the east stairs of the Sundial of Ahaz; in the afternoon the shadow ascended the west stairs. Each step indicated a certain time when hit by the shadow. The wonderful sundial played an important part in one of the most spectacular miracles in the Old Testament, even more spectacular than the retreat of the waters when the people of Israel, fleeing from the Egyptians, crossed the bed of the Red Sea, no minor miracle, because at the crossing place the sea was more than 240 metres deep! A comparable miracle happened when the sun and moon stood still during Joshua's battle against the Amorites, described in Joshua 10:12-14.

It so happened that during a critical phase in Israel's history King Hezekiah was on his deathbed. When the prophet Isaiah announced that he would be cured within three days, the King asked for a sign that this really would happen. Listen to what the Bible says:

«« In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, went to him and said: *“Thus says the Lord: Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.”* Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the Lord: *“Remember now, O Lord, I pray, how I have walked before you in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in your sight.”* And Hezekiah wept bitterly. And it happened before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him: *“Return and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people: Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears, surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord. And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the King of Assyria, and I will defend this city for my own sake, and for the sake of my servant David.”* Then Isaiah said: *“Take a lump of figs.”* So they did and they laid it on the boil, and he recovered. And Hezekiah said to Isaiah: *“What is the sign that the Lord will heal me and that the third day I shall go up to the house of the Lord?”* Then Isaiah answered: *“This is the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing which He has spoken: Shall the shadow go forward ten steps or go backward ten steps?”* And Hezekiah said: *“It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten steps. No, but let the shadow go backward ten steps.”* So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the Lord. And He brought the shadow ten steps backward, by which it had gone down on the steps of the Ahaz Sundial. »» (2 Kings 20:1-11)

## 2 - The fractal principle

My discoveries are the result of searches undertaken from different angles. The article may at first sight give an impression of disorder. But it is only thanks to a combined approach that the meaning of the miracle of the Ahaz Sundial can be elucidated. It is like a jigsaw puzzle whose separate pieces resemble nothing but, when put together, give an image. My investigations started with an analysis of Israel's cycle of feasts or religious calendar. I was particularly interested in it because of the prophetic interpretation in which I assumed the fractal principle. 'Fractal' means that a large cycle contains a smaller with the same form, and the smaller one contains one yet smaller and identical, a phenomenon that occurs frequently in the natural world. The small cycle is therefore model for larger cycles. The principle was discovered by the mathematician Mandelbrot. Thus the week cycle is the model for the seven eons or days of creation and the cycle of feasts is the model for God's plan of creation or re-creation. While studying this, I was confronted with the problem that the 8-day period between the Jewish New Year and Yom Kippur matches the symbolic interpretation of the Feast of Tabernacles. However – Tabernacles does not occur until 'after' Yom Kippur. I do not intend to give a wide-ranging explanation of the fractal principle here, but merely indicate it to show



how I arrived at a solution to the Sun Miracle. The puzzle was: “Why did God allow the sun to regress? Surely not simply to prove that Hezekiah would be cured within three days? Surely he could have simply waited for three days?”

### ***3 – The meaning of the calendars of Israel***

Israel’s liturgical calendar is based on the cycle of harvests, with a symbolic meaning attached to each occurrence. It is not only a cycle of joy but also one of sorrow! Moses says (Deut. 30:19): *“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life!”* See my article *“Calendar of Joy or Mourning”*. It is therefore useful to know something about Israel’s religious calendar. The harvest season covers seven months, with festivities from Nissan 15<sup>th</sup> to Tishrei 22<sup>nd</sup>. From Nissan 15<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> is the Pesach feast (Passover), which celebrates the deliverance from the oppression of Egypt and the birth of Israel as a people. On the second day of Pesach newly harvested barley is offered. Different kind of harvests will continue during the harvest season until vintage at Sukkoth (Feast of Tabernacles) celebrated from 15<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> Tishrei, which falls in the seventh month, the sabbatical month of the year. This brings the harvest cycle to an end and a number of harvest-free months follow before the new cycle starts again.

An acceptable interpretation of this scheme is that the harvest cycle points to the old world with its struggle and strife and weaknesses of the flesh. This is the “*olam assia*” or world of the making, in which salvation is still possible. The other cycle that merits our attention starts at Rosh Ha-shana on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Tishrei and celebrates the creation of the (new) world that is still in the process of making. It is of interest – at least from the prophetic angle – that the month of Tishrei shows an overlap of the seventh month of the ‘old world’ with the first month of the ‘new world’. Thus there is an *intermezzo*, a kind of interregnum, in which the perfection of the new world is more perfect than previous periods. This is usually named the millennium Reign of Peace, yet with a perfection that is so great that it is unimaginable ‘now’. This overlap explains why the yearly cycle of reading of the scrolls starts immediately after Sukkoth - on Tishrei 23<sup>rd</sup> - with the reading of the creation account; not at Rosh Ha-shana (Tishrei 1<sup>st</sup>) as would seem more logical. This particular day, the Simkhat Torah, is amongst the most joyous of the Jewish calendar. It is no accident that Sukkoth/Tabernacle, whose very name indicates its temporal significance, has an additional attribute – in addition to being a harvest festival: that of commemorating the Exodus from Egypt, which also stands central with Pesach, also on a fifteenth of the month. We eagerly look forward to the great day that this exodus from Egypt will allegorically become an exodus for the whole of humanity! The youngest day will start at Simkhat Torah, a new reading of the scrolls that begin at the creation or re-creation account. On that most joyous occasion humankind will have been set free definitively, also in its inner being. The annual cycle of reading starts, as can be expected, at Brei’sheet or Genesis, but the youngest day, the post-Millennium, will start at a different scroll that has yet not been written, but exists in the Mind of God.

The Mishna specifies five New Year's Days. The first two mentioned here are accepted by all opinions; the others are subject to rabbinic disagreement. (56) The first of the month Tishrei is the Rosh Ha-shana or New Year for kings, which indicates the beginnings of the dynastic year and start of the harvest season. In addition there is a Rosh Ha-shana that serves for the calculation of calendar years, sabbatical years, jubilee years and matters of agricultural significance (ploughing, planting and sowing). In the pre-exilic period this day was situated at the equinox of Tishrei 10<sup>th</sup>, when day and night are of equal length. However a backdated adjustment occurred here with an eight-day hiatus in between. This refers to the interregnum in between the Yamim Nora'im, those fearful-awful days, found on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.

#### **4 – Worlds in collision**

Moving the equinox backwards from 10<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> Tishrei matches up with the option that does not exclude a global catastrophic event. A sudden shift of the equinox does not happen without reason. Near-collisions with heavenly bodies might have disturbed the rotation or axis of the earth (Is. 13:9-13, book of Joel), necessitating an adjustment of the annual calendar. A catastrophe such as this could have happened at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (in Josiah's 18<sup>th</sup> year?), during a period then of global political turmoil that is scarcely documented. In this confusing period there was an unexpected and unexplained destruction of the Assyrian empire and, suddenly, the advent of the vigorous Neo-Babylonians. Our chronology follows that of Ivan Panin, and this lists the reign of King Josiah from 611 to 581 and that of Nebuchadnezzar II from 577 to 533, almost thirty years later than is now generally accepted. In later centuries, after the return of God's people from the seventy years captivity, the Tishrei 10<sup>th</sup> date evolved into the institution of Yom Kippurim. This was a new ceremony based on a reformulation of the ancient rite of Azazel, the scapegoat mentioned in Leviticus 16:8-10.

[For the above discussion, see the five articles by Julian Morgenstern (in total 617 pages) on the Calendar of Ancient Israel, that appeared between 1924 and 1953 in the Hebrew Union College Annual (HUCA) - Cincinnati, U.S.A. See also: "Two Ancient Israelite Agricultural Festivals" in Jewish Quarterly Review (new series) 8 (1917) pp. 31-54.]

#### **5 – A new liturgical calendar**

It is remarkable that after no more than seventy years of Babylonian exile the cycle of Israel's feasts was changed, even as regards the liturgical significance of certain of the feasts. The Feast of Tabernacles with its joyous nature was placed after the Rite of Azazel (scapegoat) which it had previously preceded. And Yom Kippur replaced the Rite of Azazel. Originally, New Year's Day was observed for the inauguration of Temples and originally followed Tabernacles immediately, as it was still observed until some time after the period of Ezra and Nehemiah, the prophets of the period after the Babylonian exile. It later merged with the day named in Lev. 23:24 and Num. 29:1, known in the Bible as Yom Teruah, which means the day of the blowing (of the Shofar trumpet). Teruah was a simple ceremony that may have marked the difference between the lunar and solar year, the one being about eleven days shorter than the other. The changes in the liturgical calendar were many and evolved over a long period of time. They went concurrently - as appears to be the case - with a few changes in the Biblical texts that pertain to their observance. How exactly and why these changes were introduced is still insufficiently understood. Formerly Israel had followed a solar year in which both equinoxes, at Easter and Tabernacles, played the essential part. After the Babylonian exile the Jewish nation gradually adopted the nineteen-year lunar-solar Babylonian cycle (57), a change encouraged perhaps by the conceptual confusion brought about in people's minds by the shift in the seasons. There must have been important reasons for all these changes. A meaningful approach to the problem is to be found in the interpretation of the so-called Sun Miracle of Ahaz and the catastrophic events that took place 90 years later. But before dealing with this, I would first like to say something about the developments that took place after the Babylonian exile under Ezra the Scribe and the Men of the Great Synagogue who were in charge at the time and were therefore responsible for a number of changes made to the sacred text.

#### **6 – Adaptations in the Holy Scripture**

I would like to call your attention to Exodus 23:16 and 34:22, stating: "*the Feast of Ingathering (Sukkoth or Tabernacles) at the end of the year (therefore before the equinox)*", and also Deuteronomy 31:10: "'*at the end of a Sabbath year (7-year period), at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles (therefore before the equinox)*". Now compare this



with Leviticus 23:34: “*the 15<sup>th</sup> of this 7<sup>th</sup> month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles (therefore after the equinox)*” and also Numbers 29:12: “*on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month you shall have a holy convocation (therefore after the equinox)*”. The subsequent verses in Numbers 29 make clear that this holy convocation is the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles. The inconsistencies of these texts cannot possibly have been an integral part of Moses’ books. Leviticus 23:34 and Numbers 29:12 must have been an extension to prove to later generations that the post-exilic liturgical calendar was divinely ordained, which of course it is (as God must have foreseen). This explains why the changes in Leviticus and Numbers were never discussed in later generations and that even a suggestion of possible amendments has left no trace in the Mishna, for otherwise the divine inspiration of the Bible could have been doubted and this would have opened the floodgates to further amendments. The only indication in this direction is to be found in 2 Esdras 14:18-48 where we read about the prophet Ezra in exile in Babylon praying that he may be inspired to reproduce the Law in its entirety. The prayer is granted to this Ezra, thought to be Ezra the Scribe, and he would have reproduced everything that happened in the world from its beginning. In ecstasy he would have dictated day and night the 24 books of the Hebrew Bible and 70 more. He is imagined as the restorer, not of the Pentateuch alone but of the whole Bible, and would have made by revelation the post-exilic literature before it had come into existence, to say nothing of the 70 other books. This legend, taken literally by Spinoza in his vicious attack on the Bible, must have been created in order to cut short any discussion about the legitimacy of the (few) extensions in the Sacred Text, and of the cultic reforms that were instituted by the Men of the Great Synagogue. And yet these Men were convinced that in the Book no smallest peculiarity of expression or even of spelling was accidental or devoid of significance. This paradox can only be solved if we accept that indeed there was some cataclysmic event at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC that caused havoc in the liturgical calendar. Because everything had to be referred to Moses, the legend was attached that the revelation to Moses, during his stay on Mount Horeb, contained all that the prophets would say after him and encompassed the contents of all the historical books in the Bible, as well as the whole oral law. In this way the revelation to Moses also included the revelation to Ezra and with it the extensions of Leviticus 23:34 and Numbers 29:12.

### ***7 - The takkanot: from Johanan to Juddua***

The Men of the Great Synagogue instituted through ordinances the takkanot, the new festive calendar of Israel and its related institutions and customs, which had to be accepted by the people as a natural development and therefore could result only from a slow and gradual process. For the sake of simplicity and in order to reinforce the argument, all changes have been ascribed to Ezra the Scribe, while in reality his successors were also involved. This is exemplified by a number of specific alterations to the Sacred Text, which from motives of reverence, are sometimes called the corrections of Ezra, although they can be traced back to the Hellenistic period. What happened in detail is impossible to ascertain because, generally, the events in Judeah under the Persian rule are shrouded in darkness. The role of the Great Synagogue – forerunner of the Sanhedrin – at certain times numbering more than a hundred members, was not limited to the first generation or two after the return from the galuth (exile), nor was it a permanent body with regular sessions. The Great Synagogue perpetuated itself until the beginning of the Hellenistic age that was initiated by the occupation of Judeah in 332 BC by Alexander the Great. It was probably an assembly that was called together when the opportunity presented itself, or it had some other means of communication on essential matters of religion in order to create a body of consensus for important ordinances, like the definition of the Biblical Canon and related issues; we should also think of the formalisation of the prayers which hitherto had been spontaneous. In this way they stimulated the unification of the people and their awareness of a national identity, for the Jews under Persian rule had no political existence at the time, but only a national religion, and in its preservation lay their self-

preservation, which at the outset was clearly understood by its religious and secular leaders, first the high priest Jeshua (or Jesus) under Prince Zerubbabel, and at some later stage the duo of the High Priest Eliashib with Ezra the Scribe, who were to serve later under the administration of Nehemiah. Ezra probably acted in an important advisory capacity, because the high priestly office was held by Jeshua and his descendants, in sequence: Joakim, Eliashib, Ojada, Johanian (or Jonathan) and finally Juddua. This list runs through six high priestly offices over a span of 155 years, instead of the 200 plus years as is now commonly admitted. (Panin's chronology reduces the initial period from Zerubbabel until the beginning of Nehemiah from more than 80 years to some 40 years, which seems far more reasonable.)

In the course of time the leaders of the Great Synagogue had become the authoritative custodians of the Torah (Pentateuch) for the mainstream of Judaism as it was concentrated in Jerusalem, the only place that could boast of a temple of great magnificence. While the beginning of the reorganisation of the festive cycle can be ascribed to Ezra the Scribe, it was, nevertheless, only the beginning and upon a comparatively modest, initial scale. The systematic organisation of the new liturgical calendar, which has ever since remained in force until the present day, came, I presume, some time after Ezra with the advent of Johanan to the high priesthood and it was probably to be fully implemented under Juddua, the last eminence of the priestly caste under the Persian regime. The fourth School of Hillel letter tells a wonderful story regarding God's providence to the Jews, similar to the one found in the Talmud (58) :

«« It has been declared that when the mighty warrior and statesman was approaching Jerusalem, Juddua, who was our high priest at that time, came out to meet him in solemn procession, and that Alexander was so struck by his appearance, that he not only spared the city, but granted to us Jews many favours that he did not show to others, giving as a reason thereof that he had seen the same person in a dream before he left Macedonia, who had assured him of the conquest of the Persian Empire. »»

During the Persian regime the situation evolved in such a way that the religious leaders, supported by the community of the Great Synagogue, could edit or add to the Torah if the necessities of the new calendar so required, for although the principle had been formulated that the Torah was complete and that nothing must be added to or taken from it, the extraordinary situation caused by the new astronomical realities demanded exceptional measures. This is not to say that this met with no opposition. For instance, the Schemites, who called themselves the Shamerim or Samaritans, did not accept any change whatsoever.

## ***8 – The Samaritan opposition***

The Samaritans (Shomrim) or 'Guardians' of the Law, which is what the name means, are the earliest Jewish sect. They opposed the introduction of the Syriac or Aramaic style of letters, the so-called square script, and kept to the archaic way of writing, known as Paleo-Hebrew, a script which is more liable to error. They only took over the Torah and rejected the rest of the Canon. Most importantly, they claimed that Mount Gerizim, and not Moriah (the Temple site in Jerusalem), was the place which God had chosen for his habitation and to put his Name there. See Jesus' answer in John 4:19-20. It is this claim that constituted the main cause for the Samaritan schism, not the mere building of the Schemite temple, destroyed in 112/111 BC, never to be rebuilt again. The hostility of the Samaritans towards their Jewish brethren was deep and lasting and this was carried into the diaspora, but they were no match for the intellectual splendour and vitality of Judaism in the first centuries of our Christian era, and by the end of the first millennium they, and other Jewish sects, had almost completely vanished. Surprisingly a remnant of

the Samaritans, numbered in the hundreds, always managed to survive in the diaspora, most notably in Gaza, Damascus, Aleppo, Cairo and Alexandria. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was generally believed that they would totally disappear, but a new vitality was infused after families started to migrate back to Palestine. Many settled in Nablus (near ancient Sichem), where they founded their own synagogue. They have steadily increased in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and should have counted in 2005 about 750 members. They constitute a small but vigorous community in the modern State of Israel. At present they have friendly relations with orthodox Jewry, the latter having permitted orthodox women to be given in marriage to members of the Samaritan sect.



*A Samaritan on his way in Nablus*

I now quote from George Foot Moore's "Judaism" (ch. 1), first published in 1927:

«« The idea of supplanting Mount Moriah by Mount Gerizim came from the Law itself. In it they found that Moses had enjoined the people, as soon as they came into the Promised Land, to put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. (Deut. 11:29, Josh. 8:33) In Deuteronomy 27:4 the Jewish text has Mount Ebal, where the whole tenor of the context demands Gerizim, as the Samaritan Hebrew reads; the same change has been made in the Jewish text in Joshua 8:30. Gerizim was the place where Abraham built his first altar in Canaan. (Gen. 12:6-7) At Sichem, also, at the end of the conquest of Canaan, Joshua made the final covenant with the people and set up a memorial of it by the sanctuary of the Lord. Sichem-Gerizim was therefore manifestly the place so often spoken of in Deuteronomy where God would put his Name. »»

The prevailing opinion, nowadays, is that the Samaritans changed the two verses to read Mount Gerizim, but if, as I believe reasonable, they reacted against the liturgical reforms instituted by the Men of the Great Synagogue, it can only have been the reverse: the Jerusalemite Jews altered history and tampered with the text of Scripture to glorify, by implication, Mount Moriah. This is not to say that they made a habit of altering the Holy Scripture. Far from it! But in this case the political motives were so strong that they simply could not resist the temptation and wilfully changed the name of Gerizim to Ebal.

## 9 – *What about the Samaritan Torah?*

If we start with the assumption that the Samaritan Pentateuch is closest to the pre-exilic version, it would be of interest to examine whether the Samaritan Targum, which goes back to about the second century of our era, contains the verses of Leviticus 23:34 and Numbers 29:12 which, if I am right, should not be there. Between 1980 and 1983 Abraham Tal published a Hebrew version of the Samaritan Pentateuch based on all the old manuscripts and fragments available. His Samaritan Pentateuch from 1997 was edited according to the MS 6 (C), which is a finasiyye or triglot in Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic and dates from 1204 AD; it represents the most complete version before the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Professor Alan Crown received a grant for a new critical edition of the Samaritan Torah, but unfortunately for one reason or another the publication did not see the light. He did, however, publish a very interesting article in the Bible Review in the Oct. 1991 issue, called: “The Abisha Scroll – 3,000 years Old?”, subtitled: “Does the Samaritan community in Nablus have a Torah Scroll written by Aaron’s great-grandson?”

A few years ago I addressed a letter on this question to the Chief Rabbi of the Samaritan Synagoge in Nablus, only to receive the letter back, apparently unopened, eighteen months later. When, a year after that, I tried to order a book (“The Northern Hegaz”) from an antiquarian bookshop in Jerusalem, all emails – except the first – on both sides were blocked. I was, however, able to telephone. Apparently I had been put onto some kind of blacklist. For reasons that are easy to understand, the problem is still a hot issue and I would be the last to state that the Temple in Jerusalem does not stand on the site willed by God. In the end, it is God Himself who commanded David and Solomon to build the Temple in Jerusalem. Of that there is no doubt at all. But this digression was necessary in order to provide insight into the work of the Men of the Great Synagogue, which included the organisation of a new cycle of feasts. The fact that there were people strongly opposed to the takkanot only serves to strengthen my argument. In the resistance to the takkanot it was the Samaritans who objected tooth and nail, a typical human reaction. Seen in that light, it is logical that they wanted nothing to do with the Temple of Jerusalem, where all religious authority of the time was established. But the resistance against the Temple being in Jerusalem was, in fact, subordinate and not the point of departure – as some historians would have us believe.

## 10 – *The Assyrian troubles*

**After this introductory discussion, there now follows the actual article giving the significance of the Miracle of the Ahaz Sundial from the perspective of God’s loving intervention, that of a God who looks after his people as a mother hen cares for her chicks. (Mt. 23:37) In the account there is an interesting discussion about the book entitled “Catastrophe” by David Keys, a journalist with The Independent; see note 98: “The catastrophe that changed the course of history”. The astronomical considerations regarding an earthquake that could have occurred 90 years after the Sundial Miracle are discussed in “Sukkoth and the Equinox”.**

Hezekiah was born in 722 BC when his father Ahaz was but eleven years old, a Biblical fact we should not lightly dismiss, because in those times Oriental conditions of puberty and marriage may have differed widely from ours. He was born in a troublesome time, to be termed as one of the most tragic in Israel’s history. Although the nation was God’s chosen people, yet they were apostate and richly deserved chastisement. Several powerful enemies were at one time or another bent on its destruction, but up until then they had always failed. This time, it was the Assyrians who attacked the land of Israel. This was to be followed by two deportations of the “lost ten tribes” in the Northern part, the first in 711 BC (2 Kings 15:29-30) and a second in 692. The latter one took place six years after Hezekiah had ascended the throne. (2 Kings 17:1-6 and 18:9-10)

A third and less important deportation of the Northerners must have followed around 650, soon after the Babylonian campaign of Ashurbanipal, when Hezekiah's son, the young King Manasseh, was carried off to Babylon for some time. 2 Chronicles 33:12-13 reads: *"Now Manasseh humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and God brought him back from Babylon to Jerusalem into his own Kingdom. From that time on Manasseh knew that the Lord was Yahweh."* For this part of the history of the Fertile Crescent, the generally accepted chronology differs no more than by a few years from mine, based on the Panin chronology. From the Bible we know that Sennacherib died in the same year that he returned shamefacedly from his expedition to Judah, which was *"in those days (...) 15 years before Hezekiah's death"* (2 Kings 19:35-20:6), thus in 684. The usual Babylonian chronology is three years off and proposes 681 for Sennacherib's death. After a three-year correction this would put the fall of the rebellious Babylon in 651 and the destruction of Susa, a little further into Elamite territory, in 649, with in between the most likely episode of Manasseh's capture. Under normal circumstances Manasseh would have been taken to Nineveh, but in his case it was Babylon, which in view of a large military campaign in that region would have become the logical alternative. (59)

### **11 - Hezekiah sick and near death**

In total, Hezekiah reigned 29 years until his death in 669. Judah's most famous king began his reign with the most extensive religious reforms in the country's history until then. *"He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image of Ashera and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan (literally: bronze thing)."* Keenly aware that the captivity of the Northern tribes was caused by the breaking of the covenant and idolatry, *"he put his trust in the God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him."* (2 Kings 18:4-5) Hezekiah's father Ahaz, enthroned in Judah in the year 714 with the support of a pro-Assyrian party, established and maintained a policy of vassalage to the rapacious Assyria, while Syria and the Northern Kingdom capitulated. This policy was discontinued by Hezekiah, thereby provoking the wrath of the Assyrians. The crucial time for Judah came in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year during the attack by the Assyrian King Sennacherib, who was forced to retreat because of pestilence that had hit his army. In those days, immediately after the retreat of the Assyrians, Hezekiah became critically ill (2 Kings 20, Isaiah 38), without the possibility of recovery, as the prophet Isaiah had announced. After the King turned his face toward the wall and bitterly prayed to the Lord, Isaiah told that nevertheless his life would be spared and extended by fifteen years, and that during the rest of his reign Jerusalem would be safe from the enemy. (60) According to some, i.e. Rashi, this occurred on the first day of Eastern. Just like Jona, who left the belly of the fish on the third day, Hezekiah is in Jewish tradition as a figure of the Messiah. Is not written in 2 Kings 18:3 that he is son of David, the usual term for the Messiah? And Christ, as we know, has risen on the third day.

To prove the prophecy, as regards his recovery to health, the Lord caused the shadow cast on the Sundial of Ahaz to regress by 9 steps (excluding the starting step), probably caused by the earth being moved out of its place, an event that can be regarded as a prelude to what would happen in Josiah's 18<sup>th</sup> year, exactly 90 years later. Why did God had to produce such a spectacular sign to prove that Hezekiah would be healed in three days? Why? The sign is usually a lesser miracle than what it portends, but here it is the reverse. The Sundial Miracle is rightly one of the greatest miracles in the history of the people of Israel, so there is much more to it than being a sign to Hezekiah.

## 12 – God's judgement

As to its significance I am reminded of the prophecy of Isaiah, made in the same period, and as presented in his section of the "Judgement of the Nations" that starts at chapter 13 of his book and ends with the "Little Apocalypse" that runs from chapters 24 to 27, with in the last verse the announcement that *"in that day (of Judgement) the great shofar will be blown, so that they will come who are about to perish in the land of Assyria and are outcasts in the land of Egypt, to worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem."* Chapter 13 begins with the proclamation against Babylon, called the Glory of Kingdoms. Isaiah cries out (13:9-19): *"God will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place. The Lord will destroy the sinners from its land. He will punish the wicked for their iniquity. And it will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."* Clearly, the judgement on Babylon symbolises God's triumph over the World. The prophecy is aimed against this whole fornicating, licentious and rapacious world. In the same way the Apostle Peter uses the term Babylon at the end of his first letter, as does the Apostle John in his Revelation at Patmos in 14:8 and 16:19, and again in chapters 17 and 18, where Babylon is called *"Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth"*. Therefore, the miracle of the Sundial of Ahaz should be regarded as a portent of the Day of Judgement.

We should not be surprised that the land of Judah is not spared the possibility of the infliction of judgement, for the prophet Isaiah laments:

«« (The Lord God of Hosts) removed the protection of Judah. King Hezekiah, his leaders and mighty men observed the damage to the city of David, that it was great and they gathered together the waters of the lower pool. They numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and houses they broke down to fortify the wall. (2 Kings 20:20 and 2 Chron. 32:5) They also made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool, but they did not look to its Maker, nor did they have respect for Him who fashioned it long ago. In that day the Lord God of Hosts called for weeping and for mourning, for baldness and for girding with sackcloth. But instead, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating meat and drinking wine: 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we will die!' Then it was revealed in my hearing by the Lord of hosts: *"Surely for this iniquity there will be no atonement for you, even to your death."* (22:8-14) »»

Likewise Michah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of King Hezekiah and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying: *"Thus says the Lord of hosts: Zion shall be ploughed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the Temple like the bare hills of the forest."* (Michah 3:12, Jer. 26:18) These two prophecies must have been uttered shortly before Rabshakeh delivered his threatening and blasphemous message. (2 Kings 18) Rabshakeh's words infused trembling and trepidation. And now, finally, Hezekiah answered not only in an atmosphere of empty religious formality, but in sincere contrition of the heart and he mourned as do the dove and the pelican:

«« He tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. Then he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. And they said to him: *"Thus says Hezekiah: This day is a day of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy, for the children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth. It may be that the Lord your God will hear all the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the King of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the Lord your God has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left."* This time Isaiah answered differently: *"Thus says the Lord: Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the King of Assyria have blasphemed*



*Me. Surely I will send an angry blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour and return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.”* (Is. 38:14, Ps. 102:6, 2 Kings 19:1-7) »»

In those days I will even give my Spirit to my servants, both men and women. I will work wonders in the sky above and on the earth below. There will be blood and fire and clouds of smoke. The sun will turn dark, and the moon will be as red as blood before that great and terrible day when I appear. (Joel 2:29-30)

### **13 - God listens to prayer**

But how is it possible that a few days earlier God had said through his prophet: *“For this iniquity there will be no atonement for you, even to your death!”* And yet God relented. It is because God is always willing to forgive. Did not the prophet Jeremiah write, a century later and shortly before Judah was sent into the Babylonian exile:

«« The instant I, the Lord, speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to build and to plant it, if it does evil in my sight so that it does not obey my voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it. Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and tell them: *“Thus says the Lord: Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and weaving a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.”* (18:7-11) »»

In this setting we should not only consider the Sundial Miracle as a portent of imminent disaster in that great Day of Judgement, but also as an incitement to repentance, for in accordance with Nehemiah 9:17: *“The Lord God is ready to pardon, He is gracious and compassionate; He is slow to anger and abundant in kindness.”* If God strikes with calamitous events, it is because we have forsaken God rather than that He has forsaken us. We, by going astray, have forced God into disciplinary action, and this is exactly what happened in the aftermath of the Sundial Miracle, more than a century later, when the inhabitants of Judah were carried away into the Babylonian captivity.

### **14 - Manasse, the greatest sinner ever**

Hezekiah was succeeded by his son Manasseh. We would be hard pressed to find a worse sinner than him. The books of Kings and Chronicles tell (2 Kings 21, 2 Chron. 33) that Manasseh led his people astray till they outdid in evil the nations of Canaan whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. For Manasseh rebuilt the high places that his father had broken down. He raised up altars for the Baals throughout the land. He offered his children to ‘the King’ (Moloch) in the fires of the Tophet in the Valley of Hinnom. He made his son pass through the fire, practiced nefarious soothsaying, used witchcraft and consulted spiritists and mediums. He even set a carved image of Asherah in the Temple of Jerusalem. It was only after his capture by Ashurbanipal, probably in the 19<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, that he turned to the ways of the Lord. He too, like his father, needed a traumatic experience to find the ways of the Lord, but he did not succeed in purging Judah and Jerusalem of the high places of pagan worship, because this was done by his grandson Josiah, in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, in the year 600. (2 Chron. 34:3-7) Manasseh’s prayer of repentance is found in the Apostolic Constitutions (2:22) and is

the kind of prayer that an arch-sinner ought to make according to Jewish notions. In the chapter on repentance in the Pesikta, which deals with the case of Manasseh, Israel is supposed to ask: *“Lord of the ages, if we repent, will You accept us? And God answered: I accepted the repentance of Cain (model of the repentant sinner) and will I not accept your repentance?”*

### ***15 – What happened in Josiah’s 18<sup>th</sup> year?***

Amon, who succeeded Manasseh, also did evil in the sight of the Lord. However his reign lasted but two years. He was succeeded by his son Josiah, who at the time was no more than eight years old. Apparently he had good tutors, for according to Chronicles, he began to seek the God of his forefather David in the 8<sup>th</sup> year of his reign. (2 Chron. 34:3) Although in his 12<sup>th</sup> year Josiah purged Judah and Jerusalem of the high places of pagan worship, it was still superficial, because the following year Jeremiah laments:

«« Treacherous Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretence. Acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God. Return, O backsliding children, for I am married to you. Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord and take away the foreskins of your hearts, you men of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem, lest my fury come forth like fire and burn so that no one can quench it, because of the evil of your doings! (1:2, 3:10 - 4:4) »»

Then finally, in the 18<sup>th</sup> year, came the inner conversion that was asked for and Josiah restores true worship, thus in the year 594:

«« None of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, with the priests and the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Moreover, Josiah put away the workers with familiar spirits and those who commit witchcraft, he removed the teraphim (household idols) and filthy carved images, yea all the abominations that were spied in Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest (father of Jeremiah) found in the house of the Lord. Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his force, according to all the Law of Moses, nor after him did any arise like him. »» (2 Chron. 35:18-19, 2 Kings. 23:24-25)

This was five years after Jeremiah had delivered his message that the purge performed by Josiah in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of his reign did not suffice. Why had he waited so long? Something dramatic must have happened to move Josiah into action. It was not a question of the king only, but all the people were involved: the priests, the Levites, all Judah and Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem had gathered. So something exceptional must have happened. Josiah says shortly before that occasion (2 Chron. 34:21): *“Great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out on us”*, but regrettably he does not specify. Then he consults Huldah the prophetess who amongst other things tells him that he would be gathered in his grave in peace. (2 Chron. 34:19-28) After careful inquiry he restores the true worship starting with the special celebration of Passover. Julian Morgenstern discusses the second Israelite calendar, where the Canaanitic names for the months were changed by numbers in an effort to purge it from all heathen influences. Calendar I is also called the Canaanitic Calendar. According to him, Calendar II came into use in the period between 608 and 586. That gives a perfect match with the date of Josiah’s special celebration of Eastern. Calendar III is the calendar that came little by little into existence after the Babylonian exile, and then much later names were again introduced for the different months, this time Babylonian, and this one happens to be the calendar that catches our attention.



Upon reflection I gather that the ‘fearful-awful’ 9-day adjustment of the equinox from Tishrei 10 to Tishrei 1 could very well have happened in this period, if indeed such a thing happened. We should not image that a slight tilting of the axis of the earth that may have caused a recession of the equinoxes was in itself traumatic although the other circumstances did not go unnoticed and ought to have inspired great fear. The long-term effects must have been very impressive too. If a large foreign body enters the sphere of influence of the earth, without colliding with it, this may elicit increased seismic activity. A large volcanic discharge in the decade after 594, caused by the simultaneous eruption of a number of large volcanoes, may have interfered with the global weather patterns, which could have provoked crop failures, which in turn could have caused political upheaval and migratory movements of people in search of means of subsistence. (61)

## 16 – God tests the heart

There is the extraordinary confrontation with Pharaoh Necho II (Dynasty XXVI):

«« When - in the year 581 - Josiah had prepared the Temple, Necho, the King of Egypt, came up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates and Josiah went out against him. But Necho sent messengers to him, saying: “*What have I to do with you, King of Judah? I have not come against you this day, but against the house with which I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Refrain from meddling with God, who is with me lest He destroy you.*” Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself so that he might fight with him, and did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Valley of Megiddon. And the archers shot King Josiah. So he died at the age of 39, and was buried in one of the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah (ancestor of the Messiah), and that is indeed written in the Laments.” »» (2 Chron. 35:20-25)

My Bible refers here to Lamentations 4:20: “*The breath of our nostrils, the Lord Messiah, was taken in their pits*”. As concerns the mourning at Megiddo, this refers to the famous prophecy of Zechariah 12:10-14, and it also refers to the place of gathering, called Har-Magedadon in Hebrew, mentioned in Revelation 16:14-16, the oracle placed just before the final act of God’s judgement over that great and wicked Babylon that is bound to receive the fierceness of God’s wrath. So this small story contains several parallels to our anointed Lord, named Yeshua Mashiach in Hebrew, the one who was first being judged and who, at the end of times, will be the one who judges. This narration is again one of those little mirrors shining forth. This has been well defined by Melker, priest of the synagogue of Bethlehem, who wrote in the time that Jesus was born:

«« Every suffering of David, or lamentation of Job, or glory of Solomon – yea, every wail of human sorrow, every throe of human grief, every dying sigh, every falling bitter tear – is a type, a prophecy of the coming King of the Jews and the Saviour of the world. Israel stands as a common factor at every great epoch of history. »»

In the interests of our present discussion I would like to stress something else. The Bible narrates that after the full conversion of King Hezekiah and his miraculous healing, he prospered in all his works. Then God tested his servant so that He might know all that was in his heart. (2 Chron. 32:31) In my view, this same kind of testing also applies to Josiah. Josiah said: “*Great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out on us*”. No doubt, that is why he turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength and no doubt that is why no one had arisen like him. But he was not the only one being moved by the global catastrophic events. Apparently Pharaoh Necho had also turned to God and God spoke through him, like He did with the nomadic Midianite Jethro

who gave important counsel to Moses who, in that case, decided to heed his voice. (Ex. 18:13-26)

### ***17 – Israel has forsaken its missionary duty***

Moses listened, but unfortunately this attitude has not been perpetuated by the people of Israel. They have forsaken their historic calling to mediate salvation to the nations. Israel's error of judgement has always been its contempt for foreigners, whom they were accustomed to call dogs and count as the scum of the earth. See the story in Matthew 15:21-28. Israel has taken over the attitude of Miriam (Ex. 15:20, Num. 12), the prophetess of lying lips and deceitful tongue, who reviled at Moses' wife Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, who was a Cushite (Nubian), and must have been of very dark complexion, like the Cushite Queen of Sheba. In those days, being black was seen as a distasteful condition. In the "First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus", written no later than the second century, is written (17:9): "*The children of Israel are like Cushites among the people, and the women said: We beseech of thy mercy that thou wouldst restore those boys to their former state.*" This shows that Cushite was a term of abuse. Having reviled Zipporah because of the colour of her skin, Miriam was punished with the curse she had spoken and suddenly she caught a distasteful skin condition so that she became as white as snow: not black, but white! The distasteful thing is that the people of Israel have never shown missionary zeal. What a pity! Not all were like the depraved Canaanites! The ancient times ought to have known tribes of great virtue who earnestly searched for God and would have been delighted to have been instructed by the Israelite priests on how to set up their own service of reconciliation as a prefiguration of things to come. (Is. 56:3-8) (62) The Cushite Eunuch (63), who was the treasurer of Amanitere, the candace or queen of Ethiopia, complained (Acts 8:26-33): "*How can I understand what I am reading in Scripture unless someone guides me?*" This underlines my point. Saint Irenæus (ca. 130 - ca. 200) writes in his most famous work, "Against Heresies" (3:12), that he became a missionary to Cush, also named Meroë (our modern Sudan, which in Sheba's time extended into Southern Arabia).

This attitude towards the Gentiles goes a long way to explaining why Israel, like the unclean Miriam, has been excluded from the camp until she is received back, cleansed again. (Num. 12:14) Melker the priest forewarned this in his report to the Higher Sanhedrin on account of the exceptional circumstances of Jesus' birth:

«« And this, I fear, is going to be a trouble with our nation: our people are going to look to 'the one sent' (Shiloh) as a temporal deliverer, and will aim to circumscribe Him to the Jews alone. And when his actions begin to flow out to all the inhabitants of the world in love and charity, as is most certainly shown forth in chapter 9 of the holy prophet (Jer. 9:24-25), then I fear the Jews will reject Him, and, in fact, we are warned of that already in the third chapter of Jeremiah's word. To avoid this, Israel must be taught that the prophecy of Isaiah does not stop with the Babylonian Captivity and return to the Kingdom of Heaven, and that Ezekiel's wheels (of ch. 1 and 10) do not whirl politically or spiritually in heaven, but upon earth, and have reference to earthly revolutions or changes, and show the bringing to pass of the great events of which this of Bethlehem is the grandest of all. (...) We, as Jews, are the only people that God has entrusted with these great questions, and, of course, the world will look to and expect us to give the answers. As we are entrusted with these things, God will hold us responsible if we fail to give the true light on this topic. »»

The essence of chapter 3 of Jeremiah has already been given, where it dealt with Jeremiah's rebuking of Josiah. Jeremiah 9:24-25 reads: "*I am the Lord, exercising loving kindness, judgement, and righteousness in the earth, for in these I delight. Behold, the days*

*are coming, says the Lord, that I will punish all who are circumcised with the uncircumcised*", and indeed this has happened. But the apostle Paul gives a ray of hope in his letter to the Romans (11:11-13):

«« I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now, if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? »»

Verily, it is not God's doing that Israel has fallen and it has not been God's doing that Josiah was slain by Pharaoh Necho!

As the story goes: *"Josiah did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God."* Josiah acted halfheartedly by disguising himself in battle. If he had really respected the words of Necho he would have decided to consult Huldah the prophetess or his nephew Zephaniah or any other of the prophets of his time, who in those troubled times would certainly have stressed the necessity of increased missionary zeal. God fulfilled his part of the deal by sending eight prophets and perhaps a few more whose names have not been remembered in the annals of history. Josiah should have invited Necho to join him after his victory at Carchemish in order to worship the true God in the Temple at Jerusalem, which recently had been put into good working order again. Things would then have gone differently and this pious King of Judah would then have died in peace and at a much ripper age.

## **18 – The last scene**

The rest of the history of the kings of Judah until the fall of the country, and its people being carried away by the Babylonians, is quite simple. Jechoniah reigned 11 years and did evil in the sight of the Lord. After him reigned Zedekiah, the last king, for an equal period of 11 years. He too, did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more, according to all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the House of the Lord which He had consecrated in Jerusalem. Zedekiah did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the Lord (Jer. 38:17): *"If you surely surrender to the King of Babylon's princes, then your soul shall live; this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live."* Even at this advanced stage of apostasy and disaster the merciful God showed, like a caring and loving mother, a way out from final demise. Judah had already suffered heavily from the invasions of 578 and 570 with a major deportation of the inhabitants of Jerusalem during the latter invasion. Notwithstanding, Zedekiah refused to humble himself, unlike Manasseh had once done. Because of their transgressions the anger of the Lord was kindled against Jerusalem and Judah, and so it happened that they were cast out from his presence, this in the year 559, 19 years from the first invasion. At this time the last little remnant was plucked, which counts as the beginning of the seventy years' exile. Zedekiah faced a pitiful destiny. He had to watch his sons being killed whereafter they put out his eyes, bound him with bronze fetters and took him to Babylon. (2 Kings 23:35-25:21, 2 Chron. 36)

...

## Notes

### Why King David should not have taken a census

(55) Plato's ideal society consists of 5,040 subjects because that number can be divided by all numbers up to 12 except for 11. This is very convenient for statistical differentiation. Imagine how fabulous it must be to be king of such a society and to dictate its rules with mathematical precision! But beware: whoever does not fit within the ideal mould shall be brutally 'reduced' to become a point, a number, a figure, an object. God created man 'equal', that is to say, with due respect to the unique qualities of each. As the Mishna Sanhedrin 4:5 observes:

« Adam was created for the sake of peace among men, so that no one should say to his fellow: My father was greater than yours... Also, man (was created singly) to show the greatness of the Holy One, Blessed be He, for if a man strikes many coins from one mould, they all resemble one another, but the King of Kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He, made each man in the image of Adam, and yet not one of them resembles his fellow. »»

So, each individual has his own invaluable service to be rendered to the whole of the many-faceted society, but the mathematical approach is precisely the negation of this. From that point of view a group of objects (points on a scale) consists of dispensable and interchangeable units. Therefore, the anti-power is not just 'the' number, but the number of reduction to unity and equality in the monstrous connotation of these words. Now it becomes clear why the census ordered by King David was his greatest wrongdoing during his kingship over Israel. (2 Sam. 24) Following that census, the land was exceptionally heavily punished by the 'angel of death'. Indeed, a census is the first major step in the reduction process that leads to manipulation of the masses.

### The New Year days subject to rabbinical discussion

(56) Day one of the month Elul is the Rosh Ha-shana (the New Year) for the purpose of animal tithes. The 15<sup>th</sup> day of Nissan is the start of the harvest festival season and the Rosh Ha-shana for the pilgrims – for us who travel and make vows in this exile within exile, in this home of mud and sorrow, toiling for better things than bread and butter. Day one of the month Shvat, also the 15<sup>th</sup> day of Shvat, is the Rosh Ha-shana for trees.

### The adoption of the lunar-solar cycle

(57) After the Babylonian exile the Jewish nation gradually adopted the 19-year Babylonian lunar-solar cycle. Synodic lunar and the solar time are in agreement almost every 19 years: that is, the moon will be in the same phase on the calendar day every 19 years. However, the Jewish method does not produce a repetition of dates within any significant length of time: they more or less repeat after 247 years (13 x 19). The Jewish liturgical calendar only became final, so it seems, in about the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. The term Rosh Ha-Shana (head of the year) was not applied until at least the second century AD. Following the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, causing the practice of animal sacrifice to be stopped, the synagogue liturgy was enlarged, new traditions were suggested, and emphases were shifted in an attempt to keep alive the religious practice of a people scattered outside their homeland and tragically stripped of their Temple, which latter was the only place where animal sacrifice was permitted. It was at this stage that the New Year shifted to the New Moon of the first day of the seventh month (Tishri).

### When Alexander was approaching Jerusalem

(58) Hymen Polano describes the coming of Alexander the Great to the land of Israel in his "The Talmud: Selections - translated from the original" # 1876 (pp. 210-211, under Simon, the Righteous):

« Simon the Righteous, as representative of the nation, proceeded to the seacoast to greet the conqueror (Alexander the Great), attired in his priestly robes, and attended by a number of priests and nobles in the full dignity of their costumes. Alexander at once approached the High Priest and greeted him warmly; and when his officers expressed their astonishment at this mark of condescension, he told them that the form and feature of this same priest, clad in the same robes

he now wore, had appeared to him in a dream and promised him success in arms. Alexander was conducted through the Temple by Simon. On entering, he said: *"Blessed be the Lord of this house."* He was charmed with the beauty of the structure, and expressed a desire to have a statue of himself erected as a remembrance, between the porch and the altar. Simon informed him that it was not allowable to erect any statue or image within the Temple walls, but promised that, as a remembrance, the males born among his people that year should be called Alexander. That is the manner in which the Rabbis Alexander obtained their names. Alexander continued well-disposed towards the High Priest, and through his intercessions granted the Jews religious freedom and release from all tributary burden during the Sabbathic year; and the Jews entered Alexander's army, and assisted in his conquests. This state of affairs lasted unfortunately only until the death of Alexander. In the quarrels among his generals, which followed and continued for two decades, the Jewish people suffered much. »»

### A new Babylonian chronology

(59) a) As regards the generally accepted chronology, there exists a problem as far as the predecessors of Sennacherib are concerned if we wish to harmonise it with the Biblical truth. Amélie Kuhrt's work of reference *"The Ancient Near East"* gives in the Babylonian chronology on page 576 the following list, which I have adjusted by 3 years: Tiglath-Pileser III (747-730), Shalmaneser V (729-725), Sargon II (724-708) and Sennacherib (707-684). She says about Shalmaneser on page 497:

«« The events of the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III's son, Shalmaneser V, are virtually unknown: there are no royal inscriptions, the limmu-chronicle is broken for his reign, and the Babylonian Chronicle records nothing of his activities, save [probably] the taking of Samaria, also reported in 2 Kings 17:1-6. (On the same page she says about Sargon:) Sargon II acceded to the throne in an irregular way: this is clear from several hints and veiled references. The reasons for the disruption in the kingship are obscure. Sargon was another son of Tiglath-Pileser III, who probably seized the throne from Shalmaneser V in a violent coup. »»

All seem to agree that Sargon II was killed in battle in 705 (adjusted 708). However, from 2 Kings 15:29-30 we learn that Tiglath-Pileser was still reigning in 711 and, according to the limmu-chronicle of his reign this would still be the case for some time after 711 because it mentions the tribute paid by Pakaha and Ausi, which clearly is a transcription of Pekah and Hosea, belonging to the Bit-Humria or House of Omri (*"Ancient Records"* published by the British Museum, contr. Daniel Luckenbill – 1926).

In 2 Kings 15:29 and 1 Chron. 5:26 Tiglath-Pileser III is mentioned. After the second invasion he carried a part of the population of the House of Omri away to Halah, Habor, Hara and the river Gozan. At the time the Northern tribes of Israel were known as the House of Omri. In the ancient records from outside Israel the term Israel appears rarely, the usual alternative being Samaria. The famous Black Obelisk, discovered by the pioneering Mesopotamian archaeologist Sir Austen Henry Layard (1817-1894), depicts "Ya-ù-wa, son of (or descendent of) Omri", grovelling in the dust before the Assyrian King. This Omridic monarch is identified with Jehu (short for Yehova is He), the 10<sup>th</sup> king of the Northern tribes; the other tribes were settled in Judah and had their own king. Omri († 894 BC), the 6<sup>th</sup> king, founded Samaria, which from then on became the political centre of the separated kingdom and also gained a certain renown abroad.

With regard to the predecessors of Sennacherib, I propose the following in order to iron out the inconsistencies. Based on the Biblical facts, the taking of Samaria by Shalmaneser V happened in 692. (2 Kings 17:5-6) So it is impossible that Sargon seized the throne from Shalmaneser. I suppose that Sargon II always acted under his father Tiglath-Pileser III as a princely lord with the Assyrian title of King. When he was killed in battle in 708 his father was still in office, and probably died soon after 701 - the year Hosea acceded to the throne – which would be after a reign of more than 45 years. That would be a long tenure but not impossible, considering that Uzziah, who lived in the same era, reigned for 52 years, and Manasseh 55 years. We have to accept that Tiglath-Pileser upon his death was succeeded by his son Shalmaneser, who for a number of years was already



acting on his father's behalf, just like his brother Sargon who had died ten years earlier. Somewhere between 692 and 684 this Shalmaneser will have been murdered in a coup d'état by his general Sennacherib who saw to it, in the infamous Assyrian tradition of distorting facts, that the records pertaining to Shalmaneser were destroyed [some of which belonged to the annals of Tiglath-Pileser III], while the glorious military exploits of Sennacherib were embellished. This trick would prove to later generations that he was the rightful heir to the throne, while actually he was not.

A notorious example of this skilful perversion of historical truth is the burning of books by the first emperor of the unified China, the bastard Zheng, who in the year 208 BC burned all the records except those that were flattering for his regime and those that concerned the application of science. In order to be certain that his measures would have the desired effect, he buried alive several hundred scribes. At the beginning of his reign 30 years earlier, he had already killed all those who dared to spread the rumour that he was a bastard, which he probably was, for a lie never hurts so much as does the truth.

### The Pekah problem

(59) b) It should be noted that for twenty years King Pekah acted as King in 'Samaria', after he had started his reign in the 52<sup>nd</sup> year of Azariah King of Judah, also called Uzziah. (2 Kings 15:27) Pekah 20, which coincides with the year 711, has been chosen as the most likely year of the first deportation by Tiglath-Pileser, the year also that Pekah escaped from the residential palace of Samaria, after which he became a throneless King until killed by Hosea, his successor. Pekah did not reign 20 years, as is now generally accepted, but much longer: for in 2 Kings 18:1 it is expressly stated that Hezekiah acceded to the throne in 'Hosea year 3', that is to say in 698, which brings Hosea 1 to the year 700 and Hosea's accession to the throne in the year 701.

This interpretation holds because the passage of 2 Kings 15:30 can be read as follows: "*Hosea conspired against Pekah and defeated him (and killed him, and reigned in his stead) in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Jotham King of Judah*". Thus he conspired against him in the year 711, but he killed him and reigned in his stead on another occasion. Here Jotham 20 poses a problem in relation to 2 Kings 15:32-33 and 2 Chronicles 27:1, 8, which is solved by assuming that the Jotham 20 statement of 2 Kings 15:30 refers to Jotham reigning one regal year jointly after his father Uzziah had been smitten with leprosy (2 Chron. 26:16-23) plus 16 years solitary, to which are added another 3 years after his resignation while, apparently, he was still alive. Therefore, Jotham 20 (Judah) equals Pekah 20 (the Israel of the 10 tribes or Northern part) and so it points to the year 711.

The last difficulty is presented by the passage of 2 Kings 17:1: "*In the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ahaz King of Judah (year 702) 'began Hosea to reign' in Samaria over Israel for a period of 9 years.*" These are the same 9 years as mentioned in verse 18:10, which conclusively points to Hosea's accession in 701, as already noted. However Ahaz 12 is definitely the year 702 and not 701. Normally the expression 'began to reign' means in Biblical parlance the year after the coronation or the taking up of regency - unless meant otherwise, as for the beginning of Hezekiah's reign in verse 18:1 and that of Ahaz in 16:1, where the year of the coronation is meant and not the year after. This is such a case again, which means that Hosea's accession took place in both 702 and 701, a very curious eventuality becoming possible if his predecessor Pekah was killed at the end of a dynastic year (at the approach of Passover). We may reasonably expect that Hosea started to rule immediately after Pekah was killed in 702, but was officially inaugurated a few days later, thus in the new dynastic year 701. As regards Pekah we have to conclude that because of the chaos after the first deportation in 711 and the insurgence of Hosea, Pekah became a king without a throne, the throne of Samaria but, as it seems, he could still count on a following in a reduced territory. Thereafter, for a period of 9 years, Pekah lived more or less as a fugitive or, if you like, as a resistance fighter until he was murdered by Hosea in the year 702, probably after having been lured into a trap. Why a trap? It is simply too much of a coincidence that his death occurred at the approach of the festivities of Easter. Only then, after Pekah's death, did Hosea lose his status as a rebel leader to be subsequently promoted to the position of official leader of Israel, but this was not without restrictions. Because Tiglath-Pileser brought the pressure of his armed might to bear on

Hosea, the latter became his vassal. In the annals of Assyria the monarch boasts: *“They overthrew their King Pekah and I placed Hosea as King over them.”* ( “Ancient Near Eastern Texts” - J. B. Pritchard, p. 284) Hosea, the assassin, was the last king of the Israel of the 10 tribes or the Northern part. A failure to pay the annual tribute and his attempt to seek assistance from Egypt caused his downfall. Shalmaneser first imprisoned him and then organised the siege of Samaria, which was finally captured in 692, after a three-year siege. (2 Kings 17:1-6)

### **The army of Sennacherib consisted of different troops in a single campaign**

(60) It has been suggested, but this cannot be substantiated by a careful reading of the Biblical text, that Sennacherib's abortive siege of Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:35-37) was different from the campaign when (part of) Sennacherib's army, under the command of the Assyrian field-marshal and royal cupbearer Tartan, camped near the Fuller's Field in the vicinity of Jerusalem (18:17). The argument in favour of a single military campaign is fourfold:

>1) Verse 18:3 starts: *“In the 14<sup>th</sup> year of King Hezekiah...”* Verse 20:6 states: *“I will add to your days (the days of Hezekiah) 15 years.”* Hezekiah's reign lasted 29 years (18:2): 29 minus 15 equals 14. So, everything between verses 18:13 and 20:11 happened in the same year, in the year 684, and therefore the whole story discusses one and the same campaign, during which, according to Assyrian sources, 46 cities were destroyed. Indeed, a huge undertaking that could easily have taken several years. However, the part discussed in 2 Kings 18:13 to 20:11 only discusses the very last part of that campaign in the year 684.

>2) Part of the confusion in the understanding of these chapters follows from the assumption that Sennacherib's army consisted of only one fighting force, based on the statement of 2 Chronicles 32:9: *“but all Sennacherib's forces laid siege against Lachish”*. However this does not imply ‘always and all the time’ and certainly not after Lachish had fallen (which it did according to extra-Biblical sources). The statement of 2 Chron. 32:9 only applies to the message of verses 10 to 15. The message delivered in 2 Kings 18:19-35 is on a later occasion, when Tartan had arrived at Jerusalem with part of the armed forces of Sennacherib. This message of 2 Kings is also found in 2 Chronicles, but there it appears in a summary of only three verses (32:17-19).

>3) It would be a mistake to assume that if 2 Kings 19:8 states that *“Rabshakeh returned”*, he returned together with the great army that was stationed near the Fuller's Field. The Bible uses in every respect very precise language, and it should be understood like that. I see no need to assume that Rabshakeh returned with the forces or the main part of the forces. I see but one possible conclusion: Tartan's army near the Fuller's Field, mentioned in 2 Kings 18:17, is the same as that referred to in the next chapter verse 35: *“And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000...”*

>4) The promise of deliverance from the King of Assyria (2 Kings 20:6) was made after Sennacherib had already departed for his homeland (19:36). Hezekiah is not especially interested in this part of Isaiah's prophecy. Evidently the problem of the siege had been already settled. He only asks Isaiah: *“Tell me, what is the sign that I will be healed?”* (20:8) We should accept that chapter 20 follows chronologically after chapter 19. The promise of deliverance means: *“I will «henceforth» deliver you and this city from the hand of the King of Assyria”*. The prophecy concerning the destruction of Sennacherib's army and the assassination of the King after his return home is all contained in the same prophecy, quoted in 19:7: *“I will send an angry blast upon Sennacherib, and he shall hear a rumour and return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.”* This word ‘blast’ is the same as in Exodus 15:8: *“You sent forth Your wrath. It consumed them like stubble. And with the blast of your nostrils the waters were gathered together.”* This promise was three-fold: (1) the angel would kill 185,000 soldiers from the camp of the Assyrians (the angry blast), (2) the King would hear a rumour concerning the Egyptian Pharaoh Tirhakah or Taharqa coming to make war against him and (3) Sennacherib's two sons would strike him with the sword upon his return home. All three elements would secure the containment of that mighty military

power of the Assyrians, who had mounted the largest military operation in history. (The black Pharaoh Taharqa of the Napatan/Cushite Dynasty XXV, who wielded his power over a unified Upper and Lower Egypt, is assumed to have reigned from 690 to 664, which perfectly fits our chronology.)

### **The catastrophe that changed the course of history**

(61) An interesting comparison can be drawn with what happened in the 6<sup>th</sup> century of our Christian era, unknown to the scientific establishment until discovered by David Keys, the archæology correspondent of the London daily paper *The Independent*, who has written a marvellous and compelling book entitled “Catastrophe”. He introduces his subject as follows:

« « It was a catastrophe without precedent in recorded history: suddenly, with no warning or apparent cause, the sun failed to shine starting in Anno Domini 535. For months on end, a strange, dusky haze plunged much of the earth into semi-darkness. Crops failed in Asia and the Middle East as global weather patterns radically altered. Bubonic plague, exploding out of Africa, wiped out entire populations in Europe. Flood and drought brought ancient cultures to the brink of collapse. In a matter of decades, the old order died and a new world – essentially the modern world as we know it today – emerged. The Roman Empire, the invincible power in Europe, tottered and fell in a few decades in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. During the exact same period, the ancient Southern Chinese State, weakened by economic turmoil, succumbed to invaders from the north, and a single unified China was born. Meanwhile, as restless tribes swept down from the Central Asian steppes, a new religion known as Islam spread like wildfire through the Middle East. These were not isolated upheavals but linked events arising from the same dire cause and rippling around the world like an enormous tidal wave. » »

This chain of events was probably set in motion by a super eruption by what is known today as Krakatoa, situated in the Indonesian archipelago. It was certainly the largest eruption in the past few thousand years. The sulphuric acid, the frozen water vapour and the hydrovolcanic ash dispersed widely, forming multiple stratospheric layers cloaking most of the planet in such a way that it significantly reduced the amount of sunlight reaching the surface. As the air cooled, the water in it would have fallen to the ground as rain. But the colder weather also meant there was less evaporation from the oceans and the land. So the sky would have run out of rain, and major droughts would have set in world-wide. In a “flip-over” phenomenon that is as yet poorly understood, the long droughts frequently ended in large storms and massive floods.

It remains to be seen to what extent a celestial body that entered the sphere of influence of our earth, supposedly in 594 BC, stimulated global volcanic activity, but even if the weight of that incident was much smaller than what happened some 1,500 years ago from now (the eruption of the Krakatoa), it may have been, and to a certain extent, of comparable import. Much more research is called for to be able to give a proximate answer to this problem. Now that we know what to look for, the thesis may be tested. I invite others to continue the investigation of this topic, which may be tackled from a number of different angles.

The immediate effects of the 535-eruption and a possible second one from a different volcano in circa 540 lasted five to seven years in the Northern Hemisphere and even longer in the Southern. However, poorly understood climatic feedback systems were almost certainly responsible for years of further climatic instability (including subsequent droughts) in the Northern Hemisphere (up till circa 560) and in the Southern Hemisphere (up till the 580s). The eruption(s), directly and/or through feedback, altered the world climate for decades, and in some regions for up to half a century.



The climatic changes destabilised human geopolitics and culture, either directly or through the medium of ecological disruption and disease. And because the event, through its climatic consequences, impacted the whole world, it had the effect of resynchronising world history. For the people who lived then, it was a catastrophe of unparalleled proportions. The Byzantine historian Procopius, referring to the darkened sun, later wrote that *“from the time this thing happened, men were not free from war, nor pestilence nor anything leading to death.”*

### **A strong national identity and xenophily are not contradictory**

(62) Israel's contempt for the goyim (foreign people) probably reached its apex under the Hasmonian King and High Priest John Hyrcanus (134-104 BC) after he had high-handedly abrogated the oral law and all its ordinances and forced the Gentile Galileans and the Idumeans to convert to Judaism, the only forcible mass conversion in the history of Judaism. Though the Galileans and Idumeans did not ostensibly resist their conversion, we may speculate – there exists no definite account of it – that these acts caused resentment and horror under a large number of the religious elite, associated with the Pharisees ¶, who must have considered it worse than the relentless religious persecution of the Jewish faith that preceded it, because now the putrefaction was eating away from within. They declared impure the soil of foreigners and forbade all intercourse among Jews and strangers out of fear of contamination. As the sacrificial vases were contaminated by the least impure contact, they came to regard themselves contaminated by any contact with strangers.

Their contempt for foreigners did not mean and does not mean that the Jews do not accept proselytes. This, however, could only be done if the old identity was completely forsaken, a misconception that to some extent has also been made by our Christian missionaries. A good example of a Jewish proselyte is Onkelos, who had idolatrous parents. He was a pupil of Gamaliel and became a member of the Sanhedrin. He made a famous translation of the Pentateuch into Aramaic. To prove his worth Onkelos showed extreme zeal in keeping the commandments. The Talmud records that he threw the money from his parents' inheritance in the Dead Sea, because it was considered to be impure. Proselytism was widespread in the Second Temple period. According to Josephus the Jewish inhabitants of Greek and other foreign cities displayed great zeal for the spread of Judaism. Once converted, the proselyte received a new name and was cut off from his family. After the Christian Church formally opposed Judaizing, proselytism receded. In modern times, conversion to Judaism has become increasingly popular, particularly in the progressive movement.

Some may object that the Mosaic law itself promoted contempt for foreigners, because of its emphasis on segregation. However, trying to keep a national identity and showing love for the foreigner is in itself not contradictory. This has been clarified in the second School of Hillel letter:

« « To secure this one grand and fundamental design – that is, the worship of the One living and true God – the whole Mosaic economy was modelled. For this purpose we were forbidden to marry foreigners; for this purpose our sacrifices were all to be offered in one place, and by one family of priests, lest we should wander away and become corrupt by association with idolaters. For this purpose we were forbidden certain kinds of food, such as were offered in sacrifices to heathen deities. We were not to be present at idolatrous feasts, nor to become accustomed to those moral abominations with which heathen worship was invariably accompanied. » » (in relation to the “School of Hillel letters”)

Pharisee meant something different in earlier times:

[belongs to note 99]

¶ The thrice-daily prayer, now called the Tefilat Amidah, was prescribed by the Men of the Great Synagogue, somewhere during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. It was then called the She-moneh Ezre or “The Eighteen (things)” The twelve petitions in the middle were presumably modelled as an antitype to Moses' twelve curses at the beginning of the renewed Covenant ceremony. (Deut. 27:14-26) Several versions exist of the Amidah depending on the requirement of the prayers. One of them has the Berakat ha-Minim (blessing against heretics),

directed against those who had separated themselves from the main body of the Jewish nation, designated with the denigrating term ‘pharisees’. (Berakot 3:25, 33a, Jer. Berakot 4d, M. Berakot 4:3) This proves that pharisee, from pharash, was originally a term of abuse for the ones who had ‘separated’ themselves from the community, the deserters or apostates: the hellenisers. A term related to it is pharits that means ‘the one who spreads discord’ – we could also say the schismatic – and is translated with robber in Jeremiah 7:11. This is why in the whole of Talmudic literature not a single Sage is called by the name of Pharisee. In ancient Greek the negative connotation was lost for an understandable reason: because they, the hellenisers, were the target. At a later stage Pharisee also lost this meaning in Hebrew. In the Tannaite Midrash, written down in the second century, the term pharash is frequently associated with kadosh, ‘holy’, exemplifying that the ideal of holiness concords with ‘separateness’. I would like to point out that in Nathan’s Arukh from the 11<sup>th</sup> century of our era, the term Pharisee is defined as one who ‘separates’ himself from all uncleanness and from eating anything unclean.

---

### **Was the treasurer of Acts 8:26-33 a castrate?**

(63) The treasurer of Ethiopia is called an eunuch in the book of Acts, which probably was a honorary title. The Hebrew word for eunuch, saris (סריס), also refers to servants and officials who had not been castrated, but served in similar capacities. The New Testament, of course, is written in Greek, but has been written down by people versed in Hebrew who were accustomed to the semantics of that language.

...

## *Sukkoth and the Equinox*



*Below is a note on what could have happened with regard to the recession of the equinox, discussed in the light of the circumstances of the celebration of Sukkoth. This is a follow-up of “The Sun Miracle” and goes more into the detail of the astronomical realities and calculations.*

### *19 – Historical considerations*

[What now follows is a quote – with some modifications – from an article by Julian Morgenstern, concerning the three liturgical calendars that have succeeded each other in the long history of Israel - HUCA 1924, in particular note 47.]

«« Such being the case, we may be confident that the Mosaic Code establishes that the consecration of Aaron and his sons and the dedication of the Tabernacle in the wilderness took place during the seven-day Sukkoth festival, celebrated as in the pre-exilic period from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei inclusive, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar, that culminated in the peculiar rites of New Year’s Day on the 10<sup>th</sup> of that month (the day after Sukkoth), which happened for the first time when Aaron officiated in his new capacity as High Priest. On that very day the K’bod Hashem (Glory of the Lord) appeared ...and then a flame came forth from this fiery apparition, from the very presence of Hashem, and consumed the sacrifice upon the altar, and presumably also kindled the sacred flame upon the altar. Ezechiel, too, it may be inferred, intended that the future new Temple of Jerusalem, later called the Temple of Zerubbabel, for which he made such elaborate provisions, should be dedicated during this same period and on that particular occasion. Ezechiel, who prophesied from the Babylonian exile, provides in 43:26-27 that the dedication ceremonies proper should continue for seven days and culminate with the commencement of the regular functioning of the priests on the eighth. In this he complies fully with the prescription of the Mosaic Code. It is

true that nowhere, in the texts known to us, does Ezechiel state explicitly the time of the year when the dedication ceremonies should be held. But since it follows that the completion of the Second Temple (construction to start much later), and its inspection and dedication are inseparably associated with the solemn entrance of the K'bod Hashem through the Eastern gate into the Beit ha-Mikdash (Temple) with intent to take up its permanent abode therein (Ez. 43:1-7, 44:1-4), this may well point to the pre-exilic Sukkoth festival, with the following day – on the equinox – its connected rite of the descent of the sacred fire from heaven, and explain why this occasion, falling around 23<sup>rd</sup> September of our Gregorian calendar, must have been selected by the prophet for the dedication of the Second Temple. During Ezechiel's lifetime Yom Kippur did not exist: so there was no confusion from that point of view.

It is interesting and significant to note also that the original Basilica of the Martyrium, erected by Constantine the Great on the site of the tomb of Christ (64), was consecrated on September 14<sup>th</sup> of the year 335 with a ceremony that lasted eight days. Evidently, this date was chosen because it coincided with the pre-exilic celebration of Sukkoth. The consecration of Constantine's church was thus fixed in imitation of Solomon's dedication of the glorious First Temple that also served as an example for the dedication of the Temple of Zerubbabel. For many years after, the anniversary of this event was celebrated by the Christian Church as an eight-day festival and pilgrims from every region under the sun resorted to Jerusalem, the Ælia Capitolina (65), and profited from the occasion to visit the sacred places. This feast has long since turned into a one-day celebration called the Exaltation of the Cross, and as such continues to be celebrated by both the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church. (66)

## 20 – *The link between Sukkoth and the Festival of the Cross*

There is ample evidence that the original Festival of the Cross is reminiscent of the ancient Hebrew Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkoth). Throughout Palestine and Syria, even during the Roman dominion, the Jewish celebration of the equinoctial dedication festival was never interrupted and was continuous until the days of the Emperor Constantine, although Sukkoth itself had been moved to the 15<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> of Tishrei inclusive. In all likelihood, therefore, the Emperor's selection of a festival, coincident with the place and time of the Jewish dedication festival, for the consecration of his Basilica, that was certainly regarded as a fitting successor of Solomon's Temple, was not only made because Solomon had dedicated the Temple then, but also because throughout the Eastern Empire this must have been recognized as the proper and divinely ordained time for the consecration of temples and churches. »»

Exodus 23:14-19 recommends three high festivals. These are Pesach (Easter), Shavuot (Pentecost) and Sukkoth (Tabernacles). Concerning the latter, Leviticus 23:42-43 instructs: *"You shall dwell in huts (booths, tabernacles or tents) seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in huts. That your generations may know that (during the 40 years wanderings in the wilderness) I made the children of Israel dwell in huts, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt (when they were headed for the promised land of Palestine that lies beyond the river Jordan)..."* Sukkoth, the greatest festival in pre-exilic times, and also the most joyful, is referred to in the Mishna as He-Hag, 'the feast' - that is, the feast par excellence. It is the seventh and final feast and thus fittingly the feast of the Millennium Age (Olam Haba). (67) All seven are described in chapter 23 of the book of Leviticus. Remarkably, it is the only sacred season found in the Torah that was not adopted (not yet!) by the Christian Church, nor were its adjuncts, Rosh Ha-Shana and Yom Kippur. If, according to the Zecharian prophecy, the 7-day festival of Sukkoth

would also become a Christian celebration, its logical place in the liturgical calendar would be immediately after the “Triumph of the Cross” on September 14<sup>th</sup> and “Our Lady of Sorrows” the day after. The Sukkoth festival would then close on September 22<sup>nd</sup> and be followed by the autumn equinox on September 23<sup>rd</sup> (when night and day are of equal duration). This sequence would agree with the pre-exilic practice. Sukkoth was originally an equinoctial festival immediately preceding the autumn equinox. This is explicitly stated in verse 16 that talks about the Feast of Ingathering (Sukkoth) at the end of the year.

### ***21 – A people that had to come to terms with its traumas***

The forward adjustment of Sukkoth from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei, along with a number of other festive adjustments and innovations during the whole liturgical year, was necessary because of the ‘fearful-awful’ 9-day adjustment of the equinox (when day and night are of equal length) from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> of Tishrei, that might have been caused by a recession of the earth’s axis, possibly in the year 594 BC. As a result, the post-exilic Sukkoth celebration ceased to be a pre-equinoctial festival. I should add that nowhere does Morgenstern reach the obvious conclusion that there has been in the not so distant past a sudden 9-day backward adjustment of the autumn equinox, that had its prelude, exactly 90 years earlier, with the sign on the Ahaz Sundial, described in 2 Kings 20:7-11, when the shadow cast by the sun moved backward 9 steps (from degree  $x + 10$  to  $x + 1$ ). He does no more than observe that there has been a loosely structured transition of Calendar I to II and he advances the unlikely proposition that this is probably due to the ascendancy of the Babylonian culture and religion at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The complete transition to Calendar III would have taken place no earlier than the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, for which he does not provide an answer except that Calendar III is more accurate. In my view, the new astronomical complexities after the catastrophe in year 594 would have caused a state of conceptual confusion. It could easily have taken several centuries before the intricacies were clearly understood and incorporated into the new festive cycle of Israel. Basically, the joyous feast of Sukkoth was no longer fit as an equinoctial event for a people that had to come to terms with the traumas of the recent past, which explains the radical innovation of Yom Kippur and the twelve-day shift of Sukkoth from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>, which nonetheless left behind a vestige consisting of the dedication ceremony for temples and churches.

### ***22 – Not the sun, but the earth’s axis of rotation tilted***

The Wycliffe Bible Dictionary states that the Ahaz Sundial consisted possibly of twin flights of stairs in stone, leading to the roof of the royal palace, one facing east and the other west, a low wall bordering each flight. The Septuagint favours this interpretation by its use of the word (ana)bathmous, meaning steps. As the morning sun rose higher, the shadow travelled down the east stairs of the Ahaz Sundial; in the afternoon the shadow ascended the west stairs. The style (gnomon) of a sundial is always set parallel to the earth’s axis of rotation and is therefore an appropriate instrument for measuring a large movement of the axis of the earth along the plane of the earth’s orbit around the sun, while, as can be expected, the poles on the earth itself remain unchanged.

### ***23 – A complicated matter***

Nehemiah 8 and Ezra 3:1-7, both presumed to have been written or compiled by Ezra the scribe, discuss the first celebration of Sukkoth after the return from the galuth (exile). Yom Kippur did not exist then and this momentous first celebration was from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei, which followed immediately after the equinox ‘as from the early Light’. How to call the first of Tishrei, Rosh Ha-shanna or otherwise, was not yet decided in the



mind of Ezra, but the holiness of this first day (Neh. 8:10), as from the early Light (verse 4), is insisted upon in his report about this special occasion. Solely based on this evidence Morgenstern reaches the conclusion that in the pre-exilic time Sukkoth was celebrated from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month. I feel obliged to disagree, because logically in both ancient and modern times the New Year's equinox must have started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month and Sukkoth must have been in the last days of the 6<sup>th</sup> month. If elsewhere I write that the equinox moved from Tishrei 10 to 1, I use in both cases our present-day calendar, but if we compare our present calendar with that of pre-exilic times (before the catastrophe of 594 BC), then of course the equinox remains on Tishrei 1. While in the new era the equinox had moved backwards and together with it the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month, Sukkoth had nevertheless kept its original place in the counting of the cycle of the year, and thus it was now situated after the equinox, and not before as had always been the case in the pre-exilic period. Depending on the angle of attack by the foreign celestial body entering the earth's sphere of influence, both the rotational speed of the earth itself and its orbit around the sun will also have been affected, which in those times would go unnoticed if both the length of a day and that of the year were to change in the same direction and more or less proportionally. What really happened I do not know, but of course a substantial lengthening or shortening of the year would also influence the shift of Sukkoth in relation to the equinox.



***The bright, smooth surface is marked with minute calibrations to measure the exact time in the sundial park of Jantar Mantar in India***

In technical terms: due to the gravitational force of a foreign celestial body a rapid rotation of the earth's axis may occur around the perpendicular to the ecliptic, which leads to an easily noticeable recession of the equinoxes. In contrast, the regular precession of the equinoxes is a continuous and hardly noticeable phenomenon, presently revolving with a speed of approximately 25,700 years. In reality the exact duration cannot be given, as the rate of precession is changing over time. The speed is currently 243.8 microradians (50.3 arcseconds) per year which would, at that rate, give 25,765 years for one cycle to complete. The precessional speed is slightly increasing each year, and therefore the cycle period is decreasing. Numerical simulations of the solar system over a period of millions

of years give a period of 257 centuries as established by professor A. L. Berger in 1976, but no one is certain about the exact precession rate over long periods of time. (68)

Before the intervention in year 594 the precession could have been faster and have fit the ancient zodiacal scheme of 24,000 years (69), representing (who knows?) a condition of equilibrium to which in the long passage of time it could be expected to return, if indeed such had been the case. If the autumn equinox moved backward 9 days to September 23<sup>rd</sup>, I estimate the spring equinox will have moved backwards 8 days, which discrepancy results from the elliptical form of the orbit of the earth around the sun. Each 13,000 years, the ever-moving equinoxes arrive at the apsides of January 3<sup>rd</sup> and July 3<sup>rd</sup>, and only then the time distance between the spring and the autumn equinox will have become identical to the time distance between the autumn and spring equinox, whereas these are now respectively 191 and 174 days.

#### ***24 – Shall the shadow go forward ten degrees or backward?***

One would be inclined to think that the cataclysmic event of the year 594 was more important than the miracle of the Ahaz Sundial, but this is not the case. If in the year 594 the equinox moved 9 days and assuming the length of the year remained the same, this equals a correction of the spin axis of 9 degrees ( $9/365 \times 360$ ). If, on the other hand, the shadow cast on a sundial goes back 9 steps, in which each step consists of 15 minutes, and the time required to travel back again takes nine times 15 minutes, this equals a correction of the axis of rotation of  $(9 \times 2 \times 15')/24H \times 360 \text{ degrees} = 67 \text{ degrees}$ , which equals a 68-day correction of the equinox. This would truly be a huge cataclysmic event if indeed it were caused by a celestial body that had entered the earth's sphere of influence. But since the account does not imply that the phenomenon was accompanied by traumatic events such as gigantic earthquakes, which in such a case would certainly occur, we have to accept that it was caused by a miracle. If God intervened by pushing the spin axis of the earth, it had to be corrected afterwards by means of a reverse movement for otherwise the astronomical calendar of Israel - and not only Israel! - would have been totally disturbed, but there is not the slightest indication in the historical records of the world which points in that direction. This reverse movement must have happened immediately afterwards, because there is no conceivable reason for any delay. Therefore the question put to King Hezekiah by the prophet Isaiah (2 Kings 20:9): "*Shall the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?*", could be interpreted: Shall the shadow 'first' go forward ten degrees or 'first' go backward ten degrees?

#### ***25 – What about Joshua's battle ?***

A miracle comparable to that of the moving of the shadow on the Ahaz Sundial, is when the sun and moon stood still at the battle against the Amorites, described in Joshua 10:12-14, which specifically refers to the Book of Jasher (Book of the Upright). Because then, both sun and moon stood still, this rather reflects an effect caused by the earth (of a tilting of the spin axis). In a translation from the Hebrew by Mr. Samuel, Jasher 88:62-65 mentions :

«« The children of Israel pursued them, and they still smote them in the road. (...) And when they were smiting, the day was declining toward evening, and Joshua said in the sight of all the people: "*Sun, stand thou still up on Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon, until the nation shall have revenged itself upon its enemies.*" And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Joshua, and the sun stood still in the midst of heavens, and **it stood still thirty six 'times'**, and the moon also stood still and hastened not to go down during the whole day. And there was no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man, for the Lord fought for Israel. »»

Mr Samuel remarks in a note that the Hebrew word literally means times, but what proportion of time he could not understand, for 'ittiyim' (which refers to Strong's 6261), he points out, is never used in Scripture to express any division of time. In my view it could mean units of time similar to our quarter of an hour. In that case the 36 agrees with the 9 steps on the Ahaz Sundial, and such a solution would nicely fit our approach.

---

## Notes

### History of the Basilica of the Martyrium

(64) The Basilica of the Martyrium in Jerusalem that once displayed the Cross, had in its middle the Rotunda of the Anastasis (resurrection) placed on top of the little tomb. The present structure with the adjoining properties is commonly known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. When, in 1149, the Crusaders rebuilt it for a second time, a much larger structure covered all the neighbouring holy places, including the adjacent site of what was believed to be Golgotha. Afterwards it was twice rebuilt, in 1310 and 1810, based on the same plan as the old structure of 1149.

### How Jerusalem came to be known as Ælia Capitolina

(65) When in 118 AD Hadrian ascended to the Roman imperial throne, he sought to pacify the embittered Jewish masses by pledging to rebuild their holy city being destroyed by the Great Revolt of 66-73 and by holding out a vague promise to reconstruct the Temple itself. But it soon became clear that such promises conflicted with the Emperor's policy of achieving greater cultural homogeneity in his realm. After Hadrian had crushed the Bar Kochba Revolt in 135, he decided indeed to rebuild Jerusalem, not as a Jewish centre but as a Greek city, to be called Ælia Capitolina or Holy Capital (of pagan worship), henceforth its official name. The influential Rabbi Akiba recognised Simeon Bar Kochba (which means 'son of a star') as the Messiah when, in 132, he started leading the guerrilla warfare against the Roman occupation. Kochba (star) is an allusion to Numbers 24:17: *"There shall come forth a star out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel who shall crush the forehead of Moab and destroy all the sons of tumult."* And this again refers to battle-psalm 2.

### The Invention of the Cross

(66) In the Greek Church the Feast of the Invention of the Cross (the Finding of the Cross) was originally kept on September 14<sup>th</sup>, now the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, together with the commemoration of the consecration of Constantine's two Jerusalem basilicas (the second situated on the Mount of Olives). The commemoration on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, which seems to go back to the apocryphal treatise 'De Inventione Crucis Dominicæ', is not found in the Gregorian Sacramentary ascribed to Pope Gregory I (590-604). It was probably first observed on this day in Gaul in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and thence came to Rome circa 800, but was suppressed in 1961.

Rufinus of Aquileia, who lived in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, mentions in his Church History (10:7-8) how the three crosses on Cavalry (of Christ and the two robbers) were found (Lat. *inventæ*) by the august St Helena (ca. 249-329), the mother of Constantine the Great, that of Christ being identified by a miracle. This happened near the end of her life. She found the crosses jumbled together deep down under a pile of rubble beneath the temple of Venus erected there by Emperor Hadrianus. Rufinus is the first to connect the event with Helena. Jerome, however, who lived quite near the place, is silent on the matter, in what has survived of his writings, but we must not forget that he deeply resented Rufinus on account of the Origenist controversy, then running high, and this may have had something to do with it. St Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, without mentioning Helena, states in his letter of 351 to the Emperor that the Cross was found at Jerusalem in the time of Emperor Constantine. The relic of the Cross was preserved in Constantine's Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in a silver receptacle, after a large part of the wood had been distributed in very small pieces among the churches throughout the world.



### **The Millennium Age**

(67) The Millennium Age is what is also sometimes called the thousand-year age of peace, and corresponds to the seventh day of rest or the 7<sup>th</sup> anno mundi millennium. At an early stage the Messianic Kingdom was already seen by the ancient Israelites as the reign of a thousand years. During the Millennium Age the self-repeating and aggravating cycle of world events will have been broken and will concord with the announced period of peace and glorious reign of the Church, rightly called the messianic age. At that time the whole of Israel (the 10 + 2) will have been assembled. The letter of separation will have been rescinded and the harvest cycle will then have turned into a feast cycle again.

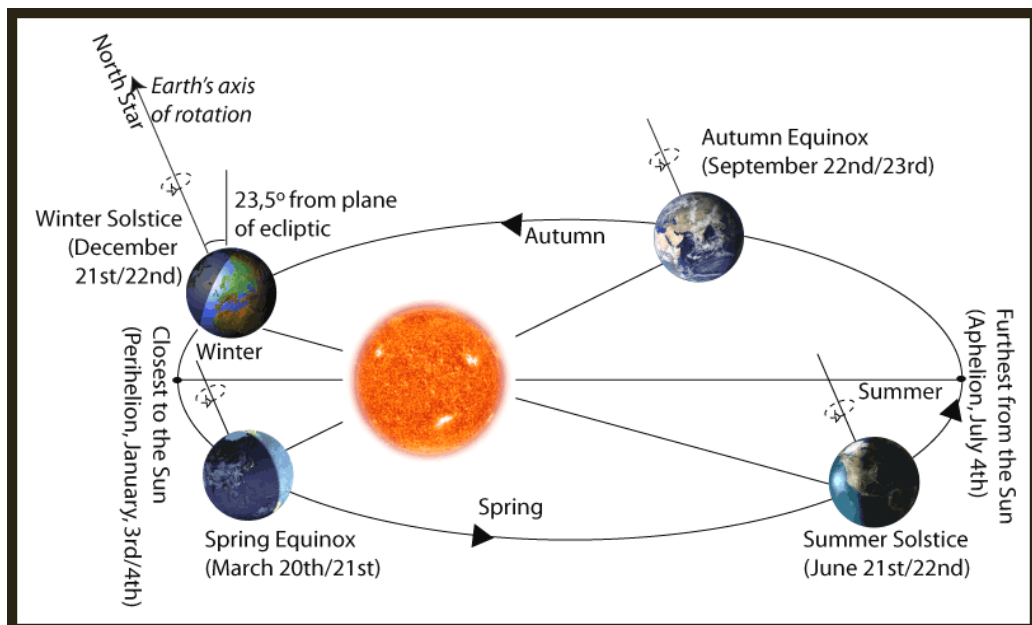
(68) Because the precession is accelerating, the total precession cycle is less than 25,765 years (the period derived from the present speed); perhaps exactly 25,704 years =  $(5151 \times 5) - 51$ ; at the same time  $5151 = 51 \times 101$ . The number 51 regularly appears in the dimensions of the pyramid of Cheops (see: "Great Pyramid: Its Secrets & Mysteries Revealed" by Charles Piazzi Smyth # 1864). The number 25,704 has also other properties:  $42 \times 612 = 25,704$ , where  $612 = 12 \times 51$ , moreover 42 is identical to the three and a half years of the Book of Revelation (= 42 months). The number 612 is also equal to the numerical value of the Hebrew for covenant (brit); 612 is, according to some, equal to the number of Biblical commandments (except the Ten Commandments), though normally one arrives at 613.

### **The Zodiac is not valid anymore**

(69) The Babylonians tried to divide the constellations of stars into an annual circle of 12 identical parts or signs, but it always remained a crude approximation because the zodiacal ring has never accurately represented 12 identical divisions, nor do they accurately represent one of the 88 constellations (regions of the celestial sphere). Due to movements over thousands of years, the sign of Aries has now moved in the eye of the beholder within Pisces, and therefore the old zodiacal system does not apply anymore.

...

## *Chanukah, its origin and place in the festive calendar of Israel*



Chanukah, known as the Festival of Lights, starts on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month Kislev, according to the Jewish calendar, which may occur at any time from late November to late December. It is observed by the kindling of a candelabrum, the nine-branched Menorah or Chanukiah, one additional light on each night progressing to eight on the final night. An extra light called a shamash (guard or servant) is also lit for the purpose of lighting the others, and is usually located above or below the rest. Chanukah is derived from the Hebrew word for dedication or consecration.

The festival commemorates the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem after its awful desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes. The origin of the festivity appears in the books of Maccabees. The first one states: *"For eight days they celebrated the rededication of the altar. (...) Then Judah and his brothers and the entire congregation of Israel decreed that the days of the rededication should be observed every year for eight days."* (1 Mac. 4:56-59) And the second: *"The Jews celebrated joyfully for eight days as on the feast of Tabernacles."* (2 Mac. 10:6)

The great event at the time was *"the miracle of the container of oil"*. The Talmud states that at the re-dedication, following the victory of the Maccabee revolt, there was only enough consecrated olive oil to fuel the eternal flame in the Temple for one day. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days (70), which was the length of time it took to press, prepare and consecrate fresh olive oil, used as fuel for the lamps.

The troubles started when the Syrian despot, Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC) aspired to reunify the Grecian empire as in the days of Alexander the Great. After a lost war in Egypt and on his return to Syria, he stopped at Jerusalem. Already in a great rage because of his humiliation in Egypt, he learned that the Jewish high priest had mounted a rebellion

after hearing a rumour of his death. The political intrigue within Israel and the deep-seated resistance to his Hellenisation programme, that aimed at the adoption of the Greek way of life for all the citizens of the realm, all this had caused his patience to become exhausted. So he ordered to destroy Jerusalem. Houses were burned, the walls were breached, and many were killed or sold into slavery. Antiochus now turned his attention to Mount Zion. His soldiers hacked and smashed the porches and gates of the Temple and all its treasures were taken away. In the year 168 BC on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the Jewish month Kislev, the Syrian despot erected in the Holy of Holies an idol of Zeus Herkeios (Zeus, protector of the Court), an idol that was known to the indigenous people as Baal 'Shemen' or Lord of Heaven. Every family had to have one in the middle of their home. The pious Jews corrupted the term to 'Shomem', which in this form (the polel) means one who makes the Temple and its altar desolate and ready for its destruction. This is four times spoken of by Daniel the prophet, more in particular verse 9:27 : *"In the midst of the week the prince shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that which is determined shall be poured upon the desolate."*

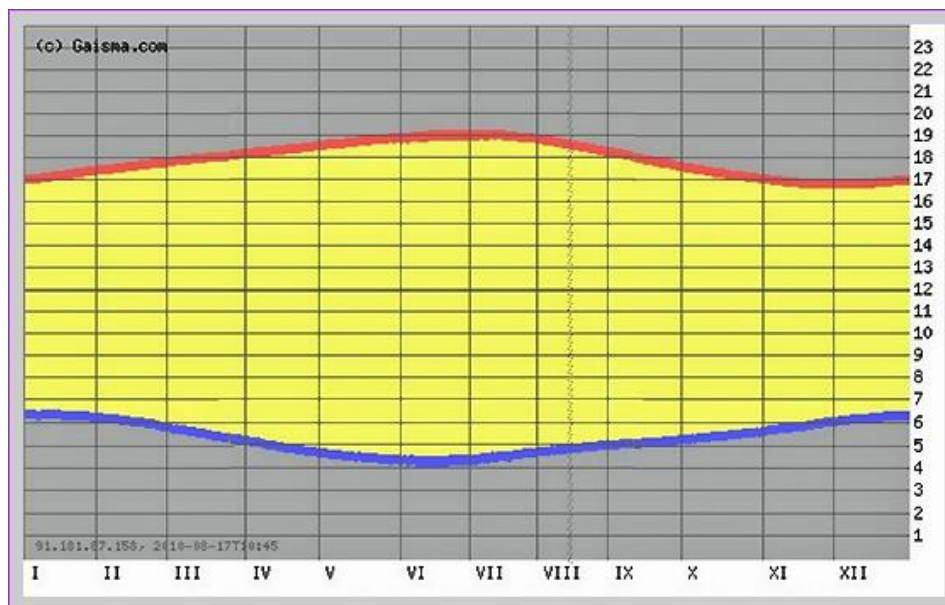
Not surprisingly, the detestable thing bore Antiochus' own face. The tyrant must have chosen the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev to inaugurate the Temple with his pagan sacrifice because it coincided with his own calendar that on this day indicated the birth of the new sun, that is when the days start to lengthen again. This particular time of the year is called the winter solstice. As can be imagined, this was an important feast. On this special occasion Antiochus offered a pig on the altar that had previously served for burnt offerings to the living God. In the Jewish mind, offering a pig was the ultimate abomination. The pig's blood was sprinkled in the Holy of Holies and its broth was poured over the holy scrolls, before they were cut to pieces and burned. The nation reeled with severe trauma. The Temple was converted to a shrine in honour of Zeus and only pigs were permitted for sacrifice. An edict forbade the practice of Judaism on pain of death. If any rule pertaining to the Jewish faith was followed, the whole family of the person implicated was put to death. Babies were hung around their mothers' necks and women were kicked down from the walls. It was either assimilate or be annihilated! A revolt ensued under Mattathias Maccabee and his son Judah. Hiding in caves and lying in ambush, the freedom fighters gradually frustrated and wore down the Syrian occupation. Three years later they met the enemy in open battle and won stunning victories. Entering Jerusalem, Mattathias and his men immediately began to cleanse the Temple and its sanctuary. On 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev 165 BC, exactly three years to the day from its defilement, they rededicated the altar to the Lord in a purification ceremony, called the "dedication (chanukah) of the Temple". This was the beginning of a novel religious institution, still generally observed within the Jewish world, known by the name Chanukah. When Christians have their Christmas, the Jews have their Chanukah.

Although Chanukah is not mentioned in the Pentateuch, there exists convincing evidence that it had antecedents in Jewish life and was preceded by some pagan tinted folk-rites that were widely observed in the towns and villages of Judeah. The public address given by the prophet Haggai, three centuries earlier in the early post-exilic period, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of the month Kislev, illustrates that this was already a sacred day. Perhaps Haggai's address is the first official recognition of the occasion in an effort to curb the heathen tendencies, which explains the extraordinary emphasis placed on this date in verses 2:18-20:

«« Consider now from this day forward, from the 24<sup>th</sup> of Kislev, from the day that the foundation of the Lord's Temple was laid - consider it: *"Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you."* And again the word of the Lord came to Haggai on the 24<sup>th</sup>, saying: *"I will shake heaven and earth. I will*

*overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms.” »»»*

Because in that era the days were still reckoned to begin at sunrise (between 05:30 and 06:30 hour), the solstice was to begin on the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup>. After the introduction of the new method of reckoning a day, to begin at sunset (at  $\pm$  17:00 hour in stead of  $\pm$  06:30 hour), all counting of days was advanced half a day before the particular event (in this case the solstice), and so the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> – marking the end of the former period under the old method – moved to the beginning of the 25<sup>th</sup> at  $\pm$  17:00 hour, as befitted the new method of counting a period, a method that has ever since remained in force within the Jewish religious community.



***Sunrise and Sunset times in Israel during the whole year***

In all likelihood Chanukah was borrowed from the surrounding cultures as an alternative and second New Year's Day. In the pre-exilic time the feast of Tabernacles preceded the dedication ceremony for Temples at the equinox, the point when day and night are of equal length, reckoned as New Year's Day by the Israelites (although, for various reasons, the beginning of the feast of Tabernacles has now moved forward to 14 days 'after' from its old place of eight days 'before'). (71) New Year's Day was the regular occasion among Semitic peoples for the dedication of temples. So it is no wonder that the eight-day festival of Chanukah is patterned after the Feast of Tabernacles. Christmas, far as its place in the liturgical calendar is concerned, is another example of borrowing from pagan rites. By the early 4<sup>th</sup> century the Church chose December 25<sup>th</sup> as the day to celebrate the birth of the divine child, so that all peoples in the Empire would abandon the perverse and persistent practice of sun worship, at that time concentrated in the cult of Mithras, a Persian light-god, officially introduced into the Roman empire at the turn of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Instead of Mithras, Christ became the 'Sol verus et Lux in tenebris', the true Sun and the Light in darkness. In earlier Roman times, the festivities of December 17-24 were called the Saturnalia. These were celebrated with licentiousness. December 25<sup>th</sup>, which they considered the birthday of Jupiter, was named 'Dies Natalis Invicti Solis', the day of the nativity of the unconquered sun (Saturn was seen as the father of Jupiter).

Even though in the books of Moses the Chanukah feast is not mentioned by name, the events leading to it were vividly described centuries before by Daniel in chapter 8 of his book (v. 1 to 12). In an awesome vision he foresaw a ram with two horns (the Medo-

Persian empire) pushing so that no beasts could stand before it. Then a goat (Greece) appeared in the West and moved so quickly that its feet did not touch the ground. A very noticeable horn (Alexander the Great) was between its eyes. The goat (Greece) crashed into the ram (Medo-Persia) with incredible fury and broke the two horns from its head, all but killing it. No sooner had the goat (Greece) become great, when its large horn was broken, allowing four smaller horns (Alexander's generals) to replace it: at age thirty-three, in 323 BC, Alexander the Great died an untimely death without an heir, and the rule of his empire was passed to his four generals, with Seleucus ruling Syria and Eastern Asia Minor, Ptolemy Soter ruling Egypt, Lysimachus ruling Thrace and Western Asia Minor (Turkey), and Cassander ruling Macedonia and Greece. Then, amazingly, a little horn came up from one of the four and became exceedingly powerful: in 171 BC Antiochus IV came to the Seleucid throne in Syria. It cast down some of the stars (righteous Jews) and stamped on them. It even magnified itself to the prince of the starry host, did away with the sacrifice, and cast down the sanctuary (the Temple of Jerusalem).

Throughout the ages, the pagan nations have been obsessed with desecrating the Temple Mount, the footstool of the living God. Solomon dedicated the Temple at the equinox; at the solstice the pagans decided to desecrate it. It was there that Antiochus erected the image of Zeus, seen as the incarnation of the sun. It was there that the Roman Emperor Hadrian constructed a temple to the honour of the god Jupiter, the Roman version of Zeus. This pattern will no doubt continue, as another Chanukah is yet in the future. Scripture teaches that the events under Antiochus Epiphanes are merely a shadow of things to come. He was a tyrant, cruel, harsh, and savage. He wore his pride like a garment. Believing that he was deity in the flesh, he referred to himself as Antiochus Theos Epiphanes (Antiochus, the visible god). His detractors called him epimanes or madman. Without warning, Israel found itself exposed to his intolerant rule, under which many heroes of faith were martyred. Daniel prophesied that many within Israel would again enter into a covenant with a Gentile ruler. (Dan. 9:27) This wicked ruler is a figure of the future anti-Christ.

During the Chanukah festival, each night immediately after the lighting of the candles, while remaining and staring at the candles, Ashkenazim Jews, and, in recent decades, some Sephardim, then traditionally sing the following hymn, written in the Medieval tongue, of which the last strophe is: *"Bare Your holy arm and hasten the End for salvation (Chassof zeroa kodeshecho veqarev qeitz ha-yeshu'a). Avenge the vengeance of Your servants' blood from the wicked nation. For the triumph is too long delayed for us, and there is no end to days of evil. Repel the Red One in the nethermost shadow and establish for us the seven shepherds."*

---

## Notes

### **Oil to be bought with the price of the Cross and through humility**

(70) The Venerable Great Conchita of Mexico (Concepción Cabrera de Armida) has written a remarkable comment on the burning lamp of our temple (image of our body), which was selected and edited by Dominique Reyre in: "La vie dans l'Esprit Saint" by Conchita – Éditions de l'Emmanuel, Paris # 2009 (pp. 46-47):

« Yesterday (3<sup>rd</sup> Sept. 1895) my little dove (the Holy Ghost) said during my prayer: *"You are my nest. I take rest in your soul like in a tabernacle, and I would also wish that in your soul a lamp burns uncessantly to my honour, that it burns with an oil that only comes from Me. It is Me that produces it in the Heaven, it is a very holy oil that is very pure, that my breath contains. This oil can be bought with the price of the cross and through humility. Purchase this oil that never spoils and that keeps burning for my glory and for the good of the heart that finds in Me its delights. Oh ! my daughter, enlarge the cup of your soul and*

*I will fill it with my saintly oil! I wish that you ask Me for that oil in the morning and evening and also several times during the day, and I will give it as it provides my joy and I embrace the heart where I find it. I want that day and night your hearts consume themselves in my honour (...) I am very jealous, I wish that everything is done to my glory, everything without excepting a single heart beat, a single sentiment, a single breath (...) See this is what I expect from the souls who are my living crosses, the nests where I take rest, I the Holy Ghost.”*

Yes, let us be lamps for the little dove that burn next to his nest that will enlighten this sorrowful and miserable life that belongs to us in the midst of the surrounding darkness. Yes, we will acquire a provision of oil to be bought at the price of our sacrifices and humiliations. And we will burn without being consumed. To his honour and greater glory I will throw in that fire, each night, my faults and imperfections of the day, so as to get rid of them completely. Yes, “burn, burn, my poor self, burn!”, each moment I’ll tell myself (...) I do not want to spill the smallest drop of that very fine and perfumed oil (...) as to be able to burn, burn, far from this world, from its anxieties, in silence and inner thoughts. »»

### **From a solar to lunar-solar calendar**

(71) Actually, matters are more complicated, because not only did the feast of Tabernacles move, but also New Year’s day, nine days backwards. Moreover, the Jewish New Year’s day, somewhere in September, has no longer anything to do with the equinox. New Year’s day was observed for the inauguration of temples and originally followed the feast of Tabernacles immediately, as it was still observed until some time after the period of Ezra and Nehemiah, the prophets of the period immediately after the Babylonian exile. It later merged with the day from Leviticus 23:24 and Numbers 29:1, known in the Bible as Yom Teruah, which means the day of the blowing (of the Shofar trumpet). Teruah was a simple ceremony that may have marked the distance between the lunar and solar year, the one being ten or eleven days shorter than the other. The changes in the liturgical calendar were many and evolved over a long period of time. They ran concurrently – as appears to be the case – with a few changes in the Biblical texts that pertain to their observance. How exactly and why these changes were introduced is still insufficiently understood. Formerly Israel followed a solar year, in which both equinoxes played the essential part (at Easter and Tabernacles). After the Babylonian exile the Jewish nation gradually adopted the Babylonian 19-year lunar-solar cycle. Synodic lunar and the solar time are in agreement nearly every nineteen years; this means that the moon will be in the same phase on the same solar day every nineteen years. However, the Jewish method does not produce a repetition of dates within any significant length of time: they more or less repeat after 247 years (13 x 19). The Jewish liturgical calendar only became final, so it seems, in about the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. The term Rosh Ha-Shana (head of the year), the Jewish name for New Year, was not applied until at least the second century AD. Following the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, the event that caused the practice of animal sacrifice to be stopped, the synagogue liturgy was enlarged, new traditions were suggested, and emphases were shifted in an attempt to keep alive the religious practice of a people scattered outside their homeland and tragically stripped of their Temple, the only place where sacrifice is permitted. It was at this stage that the New Year shifted to the New Moon of the first day of the seventh month (Tishri).

For the above discussion, see the five articles by Julian Morgenstern (in total 617 pages) on the Calendar of Ancient Israel, that appeared in the period of 1924-1953 in the Hebrew Union College Annual (HUCA) – Cincinnati, USA.



## The Panin Bible Statistics (PBS)



### *26 – The discovery of the PBS by Panin*

Ivan Nikolayevitch Panin (1855-1942) discovered that the statistical phenomena in the Canons of the Old and the New Testament are based on a design impossible to create by human hands. He was born in Russia. Having participated in plots against the Czar at an early age, he was exiled. After spending some years in study in Germany, he came to the United States and entered Harvard University. After graduation in 1882, he converted from agnosticism to Christianity. In 1890 he discovered some of the phenomenal mathematical designs underlying both the Greek text of the New Testament and the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. He was to devote over fifty years of his life painstakingly, and exhausting his health, exploring the numerical structure of Scripture, generating over 43,000 detailed hand-penned pages of analysis. A sampling of his discoveries was published, and is still being published today. Panin used the Greek edition of Westcott and Hort of the New Testament as the basis for his research, but made use in particular of the alternative readings that those authors suggested.

Bible Numerics starts by replacing letters with numbers, which manipulation is made possible because in Greek (as well as in Hebrew) each letter represents a numerical value. The next step is to apply statistical analysis to these numbers, with a disregard for the meaning of the words from which these numbers are derived. If a set of numbers in a row thus obtained are highly correlated, this points to design, because it ought not to happen.

Because of the amazing design that appears to dominate all the texts, it is possible to determine which of the doubtful translations are correct and which passages, suspected or rejected on the basis of other textual criticism, form part of the original manuscript. As Panin once noted: *"I would gladly - at least the spirit is willing, however weak the*

*flesh - have one of my fingers cut off rather than permit a single word to be forever cut from the Authentic Original.*” Below is one of his studies, taken from “The New Testament from the Greek text as established by Bible Numerics”, printed at the prestigious Oxford University Press in 1973.

## ***27 – An illustration of the methodology - the ancestral question***

As an improtan illustration of the PBS let us consider the question of whether the Jechoniah of Matthew’s list of the descendance of Jesus is the son of Josiah, the Jechoniachim of the Old Testament, or his grandson, Jechoniachin, who happens to be of Jechoniachim. Actually, Matthew’s is the genealogical list of Jesus’ foster father Joseph. The PBS settles by means of the statistics in favour of Jechoniachim. This is an important question. Jechoniachim, son of Josiah, was one of the last kings before the Babylonian captivity. He was the brother of Zedekiah, the last in line of the reigning Davidic dynasty, who was left to rot away in prison. In Jeremiah 22 we read that Jechoniachin (with an «n», not an «m») was proscribed. God refuses to grant him an heir to the throne of David. Even though he might have sons, the prophecy held that his descendants would never sit upon a throne. Hundreds of years later the curse on Jechoniachin still remained in force. The question is whose blood Joseph had in his veins, of which we cannot be sure on the basis of Mathhew’s list alone. The Davidic list of succession to the throne is quite complicated near its end. Here follows the list, in which dynastic year 1 is the year following the coronation. Of course, all years are BC (before Christ):

king 01	(1031 - 992)	David.
king 15	( 697 - 669)	Hezekiah son of Ahaz (year 692: Assyrian Captivity; year 684: miracle of the Ahaz Sundial).
king 16	(       - 614)	Manasseh son of Hezekiah (at his ascession to the throne he was 12 years old).
king 17	(       - 612)	Amon son of Manasseh.
king 18	(       - 581)	Josiah son of Amon (year 594: fearful-awful days)
king 19	3 months	Jehoahaz born as Shallum - youngest and fourth son of Josiah.
king 20	( 580 - 570)	Jechoniachim born as Eliachim - second son of Josiah.
king 21	3 months	Jechoniachin born as Jechoniah (also called Choniah), son of Jechoniachim.
king 22	(569 - 559)	Zedekiah born as Mattaniah - third son of Josiah, the last king of Judah.
	year 559	Start of Babylonian Captivity, which ended 70 years later.

Jechonia or Chonia, was the son of Eliachim (later known as Jechoniachim). He adopted the throne name Jechoniachin, and he reigned for only three months. The Babylonian king then made his uncle Mattaniah king, who adopted the throne name Zedekiah. Apart from a scheme of twice 3 months + 11 years, we notice that the Davidic dynasty over Judah ended with three brothers reigning in succession, as happened with the French House of Bourbon, the House of Valois that preceded it, and likewise the dynasty before the Valois. In these houses is to be found the royal Davidic blood. Professor Arthur J. Zuckerman has conducted a joint study with other historians regarding that question, published in “A Jewish Princedom in Feudal France” (1972).



It is remarkable that in the earliest Christian traditions Mary's father is called Joachim, derived of course from Jechoniachim, who is not a father but forefather. In reality her father was Heli. I rather follow the Christian tradition instead of the Talmudic, mentioning "*Jechoniachin the cursed*" from whom Jesus' would have descended, a tradition less trustworthy because the Jews in later centuries had a vested interest in discrediting the descendance of Joseph from which – in their eyes – Jesus came.

We Christians know about the virgin birth of the Messiah. But this was not known during his public life and it was certainly not known by the priests who arranged the marriage between Joseph and Mary. Considering that Joseph descended from the required line of kings, the priests could not have disqualified Jesus as the Messiah on the mere ground that Joseph was not a suitable father. In the Gospels this accusation is nowhere to be found. For the expected Messiah of Israel, Joseph happened to be both a suitable adoptive father and a suitable natural father. This gives added weight to the assumption that Joseph descended from Joachim and it explains why Mary's father is called Joachim, while it was Heli.

Both Jesus' parents have the same grandmother, named Phanuel of the tribe of Asher, a woman of great renown. She married twice, first to Mattan, the grandfather of Joseph, and next to Levi, the great-grandfather of Mary. Levi begot Mattat whose son was Heli. The Jerusalem Talmud recognises that Luke's genealogy is that of Mary and not of Joseph. The beginning of his list can be easily read with the following addition – in between brackets: "*Jesus, as was supposed, the son of Joseph (but in reality the son of Mary) son of Heli, etc.*" The same Talmud confirms that Mary is a daughter of Heli (Hagigah 2:4), whereas the father of Joseph was Jacob, son of Mattan. So it is the couple "Phanuel x Mattan" who begets Jacob, who begets Joseph, and it is the couple "Phanuel x Levi" (Phanuel's second marriage), who begets Mattat, who begets Heli, who begets Mary. Mary's ancestor is Nathan, king Solomon's brother. She also came from David but not via Jechoniachim in line of blood, which illustrates that in both instances Jesus descends from the required line for kings.

1	Isaac was born in Anno Mundi	2108	counted after Adam
2	Jacob	2168	
3	David	2944	
4	Rehoboam	3013	
5	Jehoshaphat	3080	
6	Jehoram	3108	
7	Uzziah	3208	
8	Jotham	3251	
9	Ahaz	3272	
10	Hizkiah	3283	
11	Manasseh	3325	
12	Amon	3370	
13	Josiah	3386	
14	JechoniachiM	3400	
15	Our Lord Jesus	<u>3999</u>	
		46,915	

The proof given by Panin follows from the foregoing list. Of the persons 'begotten' in this genealogy, Isaac is the first and the Lord Jesus the last. Of the birth years of the links from the first to the last only the following can be obtained for which the Bible gives chronological details. In view of the fact that information relating to the birth dates of the other links are unavailable, Panin only used this list.

The sum total of these dates - 46,915 - consists of 4,265 ELEVENS; the close neighbour of the total - 46,914 - or  $7 \times 2 \times 3 \times 1,117$  produces a SEVEN; its other close neighbour - 46,916 - or  $37 \times 2 \times 2 \times 317$  produces THIRTY-SEVEN. Accordingly three distinct schemes of seven, eleven and thirty-seven run through these fifteen dates; which would require twelve pages or so to expound here. For the immediate purpose of this paper the very first number alone suffices to establish design, thus:

$$\begin{aligned} 46,915 & \text{ is } (7 \times 6 \times 1,117) + 1 \text{ or } (37 \times 2 \times 2 \times 317) - 1 \text{ or } 11 \times 5 \times 853 \\ 2,108 & \text{ is } (7 \times 7 \times 43) + 1 \text{ or } (37 \times 3 \times 19) - 1 \text{ or } (43 \times 7 \times 7) + 1; \text{ and others:} \\ 44,807 & \text{ is } 7 \times 37 \times 173 \text{ or } 37 \times 7 \times 173 \text{ or } (43 \times 2 \times 521) + 1. \end{aligned}$$

Here the SEVENS (with  $7 \times 7$ ) appear, and the 37, but in addition a FORTY-THREE appears (with the sum of the figures of the factors 43, 7, 7, being 21, or 3 sevens, and similarly 37, 7, 173, being 28, or 4 sevens). But in addition to the SEVENS and THIRTY-SEVENS: (1) the ELEVEN reappears in the sum of the digits of 2,108; and (2) a 43 reappears in the neighbour of both figures 2,108 and 44,807.

The chance of this collocation being made possible by one item alone out of the fifteen is one in  $7 \times 7 \times 7 \times 7 \times 7 \times 11 \times 11 \times 11 \times 37 \times 37 \times 43 \times 43 \times 1,117 \times 1,117$ , or  $16,807 \times 1,331 \times 1,369 \times 1,849 \times 130,689$ , a figure consisting of 19 digits.

The year 3,108 produces a similar partition, as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} 46,915 & \text{ is } (7 \times 2 \times 3 \times 1,117) + 1 \text{ of } (37 \times 4 \times 317) - 1 \\ 3,108 & \text{ is } 7 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3 \times 37 \text{ of } 37 \times 4 \times 3 \times 7 \\ 44,807 & \text{ is } 7 \times 7 \times 2 \times 3 \times 149 \text{ of } 37 \times 37 \times 4 \times 4 \times 2. \end{aligned}$$

This partition is achieved by  $7 \times 6$  (with  $7 \times 7$ ) and by  $37 \times 4$  (with  $37 \times 37 \times 4 \times 4$ ). The chance of this collocation is one in  $7 \times 7 \times 7 \times 6 \times 6 \times 37 \times 37 \times 37 \times 4 \times 4 \times 4 \times 2$  or  $343 \times 36 \times 50$ , or  $653 \times 128$  or 78,200,000,000.

As Jechoniach<sup>in</sup>'s year of birth is 18 years later than Jechoniach<sup>im</sup>'s, in Anno Mundi 3418, these extensive schemes of sevens and thirty-sevens are destroyed by the changing of 3,400 into 3,418.

- Incidentally this scheme alone demonstrates that in the elaboration of the Biblical chronology EVERY DATE is CORRECTLY calculated as from Adam. Needless to say, when a continuous Biblical chronology was established by numerical manipulation, its discoverer knew nothing about its bearing on the Jechoniach<sup>iM</sup>, -chiN question.

## ***28 – Why the PBS did not get the credit it deserves***

The Panin Bible Statistics (PBS) have until now been largely ignored by the theological establishment because of the haphazard way that the New Testament came into being and was transmitted from one generation to the other (in the earliest time). From this point of view a letter-perfect design that would permeate all the texts seems preposterous. Therefore the matter was never taken seriously in spite of the mathematical formulae that speak for themselves. Those ‘formulae’ have not found a listening ear because, generally speaking, Christian theologians have not much affinity with mathematics; Jewish theologians are of a different breed. I wonder how many Christian theologians have ever experienced the excitement of a newly discovered mathematical formula, to be compared with the excitement of a connoisseur who tastes some exquisite wine.

Panin’s mathematical validation of PBS, with a view to estimating the probability of random distribution, was done when the practical mathematization of huge numbers was not yet within reach, because computers did not exist. Panin tested PBS with Greek works of secular writers but failed to find any significant relation. His comparisons and calculations remained tentative, for his approach did not and could not use the mathematical tools essential for randomisation of the object of study. This also explains why no one from the scientific establishment endeavoured to criticise his work when first published, because a rigorous criticism demands the same tools. For sure, the PBS phenomenon is of such a high level of sophistication that, even with the help of computers, it needs a genius to invent a neatly readable plain text with the required underlying statistical framework. I am confident that an improved and disciplined validation and sensitivity analysis, by a mathematical expert using the tools and statistical standards of today, will still show exceptionally low levels of significance, even if higher than those of Panin, who commonly calculated significance levels of far less than one in a billion, while even one in a thousand would be acceptable to allow for design.



*Ivan Panin, door Aronson (1916)*

## ***29 – The original as it always existed in the Mind of God***

Because the early Christians did not use a copying system even remotely similar to that of the Jewish scribes that could secure a faithful multiplication of the Holy Scripture in minute detail, the common versions in Greek that circulated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century should have counted thousands of letter variations as compared to the authentic text. Logically those common versions should contain more than 14,000 letter variations, or 2%, from the authentic text that, at a quick guess, totals 700,000 letters (the number of Greek words of the New Testament is 138,000). This would, of course, yield far fewer word variations and even fewer sentence variations. Actually, the number of contested renderings of the Holy Writ consisted of 3,000 readings, which have been tested by means of the PBS. It

should be noted that the kind of discrepancies are in most cases inconsequential for an appropriate interpretation of the text. Undoubtedly Westcott & Hort's revision of the original Greek of the New Testament has restored a great deal of the autographs, but it would be a true miracle if they had managed to restore the 'original' Versions in letter-perfect detail. Such a miracle would of course be possible, but it is not necessarily the only way out. God may have chosen to work with our human frailties over the span of many centuries in such a way that would finally lead to the letter-perfect script as it existed in the Mind of God. This perfect script in God's Mind could differ in letter-detail from the original autographs in the beginning of our Christian era. Whatever the case, the kind of mathematical analysis as performed by Panin requires a nearly perfect text, because one digit change alone destroys the statistical framework of a whole section and if the corruption of the text grows larger, a point is very soon reached where a reconstruction of the original text surpasses our human genius. Panin has demonstrated that the variations from the original as it exists in the Mind of God were reduced by Westcott & Hort to some wrong spellings and to 13 double-bracketed passages that were stamped by them as "Interpolations" (of a total of 15). I can readily accept that Westcott & Hort managed to weed out all the intentional corruptions, like the so-called Johannine Comma of 1 John 5:7-8, but to fully appreciate their work we should also consider the unintentional corruptions.

**IVAN PANIN** was born in Russia in 1855. A firm agnostic and nihilist, he was exiled for participating in plots against his government, emigrated to Germany, and eventually to the United States. Here he graduated from Harvard as a Master of Literary Criticism, delivering outstanding lectures at premium venues. His conversion to Christianity in the late 1880's was an event that produced no small public stir, as his agnostic position was well-known and had been considered unassailable.

In 1890, his attention was caught by the prologue of the Gospel of John, in which the article is used before God in one instance, then left out in the next: "...and the Word was with *'the'* God, and the Word was God". His keen literary and mathematical mind was aroused, and he began to examine the text to see if there was an underlying pattern contributing to what arrested his trained eye. Making parallel lists of verses with and without the article, he discovered striking mathematical relationships. Undaunted by the enormity of the task, he progressively unearthed a treasury of numeric relationships. Until his death in 1942 Panin labored continuously, discovering complex numerical patterns throughout the Greek New Testament – often to the detriment of his health. The overwhelming conclusion drawn from his studies is simple: *"Were this done intentionally by man, it would have demanded the collaboration of all writers of the Bible – and the condition that all of them be mathematicians of the highest order."* Ivan Panin spent fifty years of his life documenting in detail the numerical designs in the Bible, handwriting 40,000 pages of his computations.

Of course, Westcott & Hort did not pretend to have produced a letter-perfect sample of the original as it exists in the Mind of God, although the ideal was ever present in their minds. That they have accomplished this remarkable feat of an almost faultless text is because of factors beyond their control: the phenomenal mathematical design underlying the texts throughout the whole Bible was only to be discovered by Ivan Panin in 1890, nine years after Westcott & Hort had completed their task. In 1934 Panin, then 79 years

old, published the Greek text of the New Testament determined by his method to be the same, letter by letter, as the original as it has always existed in the Mind of God. His method conclusively proves that all the manuscripts had the same divine author, but does not prove that the men who were writing the first manuscripts or translating them from some Hebrew original, or inadvertently modifying them at some later stage in the way intended by God, were aware of the fact that every word, yes every letter, was divinely inspired and was to be inscribed in one of the great works of creation of God the Almighty.

**From the preface of Peter James' "Centuries of Darkness" (1991)**

A superbly fashioned hand-axe or a solid gold Egyptian funerary mask may work as a picturesque museum-piece, but by itself can actually tell us very little about the past. Unless we know more exactly where it was discovered at an archaeological site and what it was found with - it will remain a curio without a context. Date, of course, is a crucial aspect of context. One of the first things anyone wants to know about an ancient find is simply: how old is it? Despite this, dates in archaeology and history seem to have acquired a bad name, perhaps not surprisingly, given the generations of school children forced to digest tedious lists of events with no apparent logic in their order other than their chronological sequence. Trainee archaeologists and ancient historians, too, have to learn basic sets of dates and, having absorbed the information, put it to the back of their minds. From then on it can be taken for granted, and chronology, for those eager to press on with the deeper study of ancient societies, is all too often treated as a necessary evil. Unfortunately there are also some scholars who, like poor history teachers, become totally preoccupied with the minutiae of dating and miss the point of the exercise. These prompted the great Sir Mortimer Wheeler to write: "*We have (...) been preparing time-tables; let us now have some trains.*" The problem with Wheeler's impatient demand is that timetables in themselves are not enough; they have to be accurate before the trains can start running, otherwise you'll miss the connections between them. In archaeological terms, the cultural interactions of the ancient world remain a complete jumble unless we have a reliable time-scale.

**30 – A correction to the Panin Bible Chronology**

Panin's chronology places Jesus' birth in 3,999 AM (Anno Mundi: years as from Adam), which is based on the Daniel 9:24-25: "*From the going forth of the decree to restore Jerusalem unto an anointed one, a prince, shall be 483 years.*" The decree by King Cyrus was in the year 3517 AM (the first of the 483 years) as had been established by the Panin chronology, which immediately follows the end of the Babylonian exile, in the year 3,516. The year of the decree is mentioned in Ezra 1:1-3: "*And in year 1 of Cyrus (...), he made a proclamation (...) that the Lord charged him to build Him a house in Jerusalem.*"

The Blessed Augustinian Anna-Katarina Emmerick, however, 'saw' that Jesus was born at the 'end' of 3,997 AM (not 3,999 AM), which advance ought to have been in response to the prayers of the Virgin Mary. The year 3,999 AM was thus planned in the Mind of God, and 3,997 AM its advance. We find a remarkable confirmation of this conclusion in Maria Valtorta's "Il poema dell'Uomo-Dio" in which she relates the Temple incident when the infant Jesus, because of his knowledge, astonished the scholars (Luke 2:41-49):

«« Jesus was then twelve years old. Gamaliel and Hillel, already old men, were both present, the first one explaining that the Messiah must have been born already because **since almost ten years the announced period of Daniel's seventy week-years prophecy had elapsed**. Jesus says: *"The prophecy, cannot be mistaken in its declaration of time, (...) and so, when that time was accomplished, the period was also accomplished of the 'sixty two plus one' weeks ( $69 \times 7 = 483$ ) since the Temple proclamation."* »»

If we subtract the ten years from Jesus' age we arrive at the period when Jesus was two years old, which accords with our calculation of the advance of the birth of Jesus due to Mary's ardent prayers!

According to the Gregorian calendar, Jesus was born in 8 BC. (See my article "Proofs of the Life and Death of Jesus".) In the Anno Mundi calendar this equals the year 3,997. To synchronise the Anno Mundi calendar with the Gregorian, Panin assumes 4 BC for the date of Jesus' birth. In his eyes this is identical to 3,999 AM, and therefore two years should be deducted for every one of Panin's years. If, as an example, the Panin chronology gives the year 1,466 BC for the start of the Exodus, this must be corrected to 1,468 BC. Calculated backwards from now, i.e. from the year of our Lord 2008, this equals  $2,008 + 1,468 - 1 = 3,475$  years 3,475 years ago; that is three-and-a-half millennia ago. The 'minus 1' is required because there is no year zero in the Gregorian calendar.

The authentic Mark 6:52-53 is not the letter-perfect as in the Mind of God:

An example of the principle that the first Script did not necessarily be letter perfect in the mind of God, is given by fragment 7Q5  $\approx$  Mark 6:52-53, found at Qumran. The fragment indicates that the Greek word 'diapersantes' (having crossed over) was written with a tau instead of a delta, and also that the words 'epi tên gēn' (to the land) were missing, while Panin's numerical analysis shows that diapersantes should be with a delta and that the three missing words, that evidently were missing in the original, should be included. This divergence becomes understandable if we place the writing down of these words in that particular period (ante 68 AD) and in that particular place (Jerusalem). For more details see Carsten Thiede: "7Q5 – Facts or Fiction?" - The Westminster Theological Journal 57 # 1995 (pp. 471-74).

## APPENDIX 8

## How long did the Israelites stay in Egypt?

### — A chronological maze —

It is considered a *fait accompli* that Christ was born in 4 or 3 BC. Based on a schematic division of history that would have happened in the year 4,000 AM (Anno Mundi: as from Adam). However, He was born in 8 BC, which, to be precise, occurred in the year 3,977 AM, as is explained in the previous article. Assuming that Christ was born around 4 BC we have to come to the conclusion that the Evangelist Luke used a white lie, because there was no census then in that part of the Roman Empire. Because the Prophet Micah had predicted that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, there had to be a reason why the Holy Family stayed in Bethlehem at the time when Christ was born, and that would explain why Luke contrived the census – and ‘en passant’ the visit of the three kings; but as a matter of fact, so they fantasize, the child was quite normally born in Nazareth. The incorrectly named ‘Luke Legend’ goes as follows:

«« And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that a census should be taken over the whole world. (...) And all went to be registered, every one into his own city. And because Joseph was of the house and lineage of David, he also went up (...) unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, and together with Mary he went to be registered (with the Roman authorities). (...) And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered, and she brought forth her firstborn son. »»

You see, this is the way our theologians and historians destroy the faith of the unsuspecting public. I made perfectly clear in “When was Christ Born” (in *Proofs of the Life and Death of Jesus*) that Christ was born at the time of the census, which occurred, as is common knowledge, in the year 8 BC. As a result some other important dates also shifted, but for each shift a satisfactory answer has been found. After a thorough analysis, the study shows that it was Flavius Josephus who invented a white lie, and not the evangelist Luke. That of all people Flavius Josephus falsified history is unthinkable to our highly qualified scientists! Don’t touch at the reputation of Flavius Josephus! But yet that’s the only way out.

From the foregoing, the importance of the chronology of events impresses itself. As Peter James noticed, chronology is too often regarded as an unavoidable evil by people specialised in ancient civilizations, having been bored by the tedious repetition of dates at school. But they are important, very much so: a shift of a mere four years in the date of birth of Jesus Christ casts serious doubts on the historicity of the Biblical account. Historicity is the historical actuality of persons and events, meaning the quality of being part of real history as opposed to being some myth, legend, or pure fiction. Historicity focuses on the true value of knowledge claims about the past – denoting historical actuality, authenticity, and factuality. The historicity of a claim about the past is its factual status and credibility. A chronology is in itself inadequate; it has to be accurate to arrive at a



sequence of events in relation to the other events that happen simultaneously. In archaeological terms, the cultural and political interactions of the ancient world remain a complete jumble unless we have a reliable time-scale. Consequently, it is not just an object of curiosity to get to know the exact time frame of the Egyptian Exile, which only would interest a number of antiquated armchair scholars.

It might come as a surprise, but in terms of a continuous Bible chronology this question is of the utmost importance. Christ's year of birth happens to be the pivotal point between the old and the new chronology. Genesis 5:3 tells that Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born; this happened in 130 AM. This way of the counting of dates continues until we finally arrive at Jesus' birth in the year 3,999 AM, which due to the prayers of the Most Holy Virgin was advanced by two years. Therefore, the year 3,997 before Christ was the beginning of Adam, which in our Gregorian calendar accords with 4005 BC, knowing that Christ was born in 8 BC. The Anno Mundi counting until Jesus' birth has many hurdles, that without exception have been perfectly solved by Ivan Panin. He departed from the principle that the Bible in itself contains all the chronological answers and that there is no need to use the profane literature. The counting of years is not an easy task, as appears from the Jewish calendar. Their calendar counted for our year 2,000 AD, the year 5,760 AM, while in reality it should have been 6,004 AM. This represents a miscalculation of 244 years. I never looked into the issue why they missed the mark by 244 years, because the numerical pattern of the PBS (Panin Bible Statistics) provides indisputable proof of the correctness of Panin's chronology.

In the continuous Bible chronology, the duration of the Egyptian Exile is an important point. Was it 210 years, 240, 400 or 430 years? It is not just about 4 years difference, as with Jesus' birth, but the difference can add up to 220 years (430-210). The PBS indicates that the Egyptian Exile ended in the 15<sup>th</sup> century BC, to be precise in 1,468 before Christ (cf. Panin + 2). The so-called 400 years Exile is presented in Genesis 15:12-14:

«« And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram. And, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And the Lord said unto Abram: *“Know of a surety that your descendants shall be ‘strangers’ in a land that is not theirs, and they shall be slaves; and they will be afflicted for 400 years. But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and they shall leave with many possessions.”* »»

A complicating factor is Exodus 12:40-41: *“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years. And it came to pass that the people of God left Egypt on the selfsame day, 430 years after they had arrived.”* Based on the New Testament letter to the Galatians (quoted in the next section), Panin chooses this number to arrive at the time of the Exile. He does not discuss Genesis 15:12-14, mentioning 400 years. I venture to discuss these 400 years, an unsolved problem hitherto; usually one chooses the one or the other, 400 or 430 years, without discussing the other. What now follows explains the meaning of those 400 years in relation to the 430 years.

The 430 years stated, fits the era of ADT (Anno Domus Testamenti), or the number of years after the large dome covenant with Abraham. Psalm 105:8-10 reveals: *“He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations: the covenant He made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the*



*same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant.*” The 430 years of Galatians 3:17 are described as follows: *“The Law (the Ten Commandments), which came to be 430 years later, cannot annul the arrangement that was confirmed before by God that it should make the promise (of the large dome covenant) of no effect.”* The correct reading of Exodus 12:40-41 is thus as follows, freely translated: *“They sojourned in Egypt until the year 430. On precisely New Year’s Eve the people went out of Egypt (and that day is commemorated at the Jewish Pesach/ Eastern).”* As it is likely that the day of the large dome covenant came to serve as the head of the year, based on this verse we may assume that the large dome covenant was made at Eastern! Now it happens that on several occasions God made promises to Abram. The first time when he was 75 years old, but only the last and third time did it become the ‘everlasting’ covenant. (Gen. 12 and 17) He was then 99 years old and only then was his name changed from Abram to Abraham (father of many peoples); only then was the Covenant sealed with blood by means of circumcision, providing it with the force of law (without the shedding of blood no sealing), and only then Sarah conceived the promised son, to be named Isaac, who was born when Abraham was still 99 years old.

The 400 years of being a stranger, foreseen in Abram’s horrible dream, are not necessarily contradictory to the foregoing as they refer to the time of the covenant with Abimelech (Gen. 21:22-34), that therefore took place in the year 30 ADT (430-400). That announces the beginning of a discrimination and oppression that runs forth all the way until the end of the Egyptian oppression. The flow of the narrative leaves little choice as to the reason of the covenant with Abimelech. After having concluded the covenant it states that Abraham *“sojourned”* (גֵּר) in the land of the Philistines (21:34). In Hebrew this kind of ‘sojourning’ is derived from the word for ‘alien’ or ‘stranger’, and indeed the family of Abraham was oppressed by the Philistines – not however by the Hethites (Gen. 23:6) – even after they had lived already for 55 years in the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:4). Canaan was also the land where Isaac was born, his homeland, but yet Isaac was commanded to *“sojourn”* in the land (26:3); Jacob *“sojourned”* in exile in the land of Cham – another name for Egypt (Ps. 105:23) – while his sons said that they had come to Egypt to *“sojourn”* there (47:4). The first 30 years ADT, in Canaan, do not count, for in this period of time the nature of Abraham’s stay still differed. Though an expatriate, he was held in the highest esteem (because of his military operations). The incident with Abimelech shows that the esteem had started to fade away. Remember, Abraham lived much longer than the Philistines. The old clan, who had respected him, was too old or had died already, Abraham having reached 130 years of age when he made the covenant with Abimelech, with another 45 years in store.

To be able to understand the following it easier to open your Bible. The *“at that time”* of Genesis 21:22 is unspecified in Hebrew and can be seen separately from the preceding verses, which deals among other things with Isaac’s weaning, nine months after the large dome covenant was made (ADT zero). Therefore the translation *“at the same time”* is misleading. I prefer to read it as follows: *“At that time (we are discussing – the time of the conflict that led to the covenant with the Abimelech of Gerar) – it happened that the Abimelech and his Pichol said to Abraham: etc.”* Remarkably, the first verse of the next chapter, which deals with the Akeda Isaac (Isaac’s Sacrifice or his binding), denotes through the word *“acher”* a close connection with the preceding though not immediately in time, for then it would have been ‘acheroj’. Actually, a six years’ interval lies in

between. I count six because, according to the Book Jasher, Sarah died a few days after the Akeda/binding. The Bible informs us when she died (see Gen. 17:17 together with Gen. 23:1). Abraham was then 136 years old and Isaac 36. Genesis 21:22 and 23:1 belong to those instances where the division into chapters is bound to lead to erroneous views. Genesis 22:19 should have been the beginning of chapter 23, while 21:22 should have been the beginning of chapter 22.

In the end it appears that the sojourn in Egypt lasted only 240 years. As a simple chronology shows, Jacob was born from Isaac when his father was 60 years old and at the time when Isaac's father Abraham was 159 years, which therefore happened in 60 ADT. The Bible also tells that Jacob was 130 years old at the beginning of the Egyptian Exile, which brings us to 190 ADT (60+130). The end of the Exile is 430 ADT. The subtraction (430-190 = 240) gives the duration of the Egyptian Exile. According to Genesis 15:16 they would have returned after four generation ( $4 \times 70 = 280$ ), which here includes the 40 years Exodus. In being a stranger there were two exiles: a simple one of 160 years (a diaspora: away from home and yet at home), and the Egyptian one of 240 years, together 400. Only at the end of the Exodus the Promised Land had become their real homeland.

We may wonder why things are often so complicated in the Bible. First, because real life is full of unexpected twists and turns. And second, because God always gives a choice. Those who want to insist in not believing in God and his book, will always find a reason not to believe, and those who believe wholeheartedly in God and the Bible will, after some searching, always find a reason to substantiate their faith. Nevertheless, those who persist in their idiotic unbelief have no excuse when standing before the Throne of God, because there is sufficient evidence to believe. Not wanting to hear, they did not hear.

• • •

-----

Note: An interesting observation is that in Jewish tradition it was known that the Egyptian Exile lasted much less than 400 or 430 years. The Ancient Book Jasher 81:3 states: "And the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in the land of Egypt in hard labor, was 210 years." And those 210 years are still the accepted solution within the Jewish body. The fact remains that in the traditional explanation the two periods of 400 and 430 years cannot be reconciled, though many efforts have been made to do so.